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The New American

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IS THE DOLLAR SINKING?

Peter Schiff Weighs in on the State of the Economy

The National Security State and the American Cultural Revolution
General Michael T. Flynn (Ret.)

The Real Teddy Roosevelt
Dr. Thomas DiLorenzo

Sloth, Diligence, and Moral Clarity in the Post-Christian West
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From the Publisher

Issues That Matter

If the events of the first few days of 2026 are any indication, this year will be a time of rapid and perhaps shocking change. As I write these words, the American intervention in Venezuela is dominating the news cycle, with the momentous goings-on in Iran a close second. While we at *The New American* stay abreast of the daily news ephemera — the latest bombing, the most recent controversy from President Donald Trump's Truth Social feed, the vicissitudes of the economy, and so forth — we remain, as ever, focused on the issues that truly matter and on the principles that undergird them.

For example, in anticipation of likely U.S. military action in Venezuela, we decided to publish in last month's issue an in-depth article on the Monroe Doctrine, believing that it would soon be a dominant topic among the media talking heads and podcasters. And *voilà!* No sooner did that issue roll off the presses, than everyone began talking about the "Donroe Doctrine" and whether the president was justified in sending troops to snatch Venezuelan dictator Nicolás Maduro and his wife. We will have much more to say about the Venezuelan action in future issues; suffice it to say that anticipating such events, while not an exact science, has always been our stock in trade, and is made easier by our focus on principles and on the agendas of the people who truly drive world events — the Insiders, as we sometimes style them.

So, what about this issue, where we focus on the warnings of eminent economist and investor Peter Schiff, justly famous for correctly predicting the 2007 market collapse and subsequent Great Recession? Schiff was roundly ridiculed 20 years ago by court economists such as Arthur Laffer, all of whom thought the economy was in wonderful shape. Schiff, however — a rare example of an investor who truly understands how finances work, including the insidious causes and effects of inflation — was unmoved, because he grasped economic principles. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he was able to separate the distractions from the reality of what was taking place below the surface and beyond the ken of the vacuous analysts who constitute the financial news cadre.

Fast-forward two decades to our time, and once again Peter Schiff is sounding the tocsin. For his warnings, he earned a nasty, semi-coherent rebuke in Trump's Truth Social feed. Schiff, Trump fulminated, is a "jerk" and a "Trump hating loser who has already proven to be wrong." Schiff, for his part, had the temerity to insist, on Fox News of all places, that the economy wasn't nearly as rosy as Trump had been trumpeting. Inflation, Schiff claimed, was much worse than the president was willing to admit, and the underlying fundamentals bespoke of another, greater market collapse ere long.

Unable to resist a good controversy, *The New American* interviewed Schiff a few days after his public back-and-forth with the president, and an excerpted text of the interview is the headline for this issue. While we would all like to avoid a reprise of the Great Recession, Schiff invites us to consider that, in the end, the pitiless laws of economics will take effect, and all of the flummery and deception that have plumped up our fake, inflationary economy will be swept away. Schiff anticipates an eventual collapse of the dollar — and the soaring prices of gold and silver since that interview have magnified that likelihood. There are portents of very bad financial weather ahead to which we all ought to take heed, and this — rather than Venezuela, Ukraine, Gaza, or Taiwan — may end up being the great sleeper story of 2026. After all, figures can be massaged, currency manipulated, and systemic weaknesses and distortions covered up for only so long. In the end, economic principles and reality will have their say.

As everyone knows, forewarned is forearmed. I know of no better source for being both forewarned and forearmed than our humble publication and the people who contribute to it. This issue, besides Peter Schiff, features the likes of General Michael Flynn, historian Thomas DiLorenzo, and Dr. Duke Pesta, as formidable a lineup as has ever graced our pages. Add to this our Freedom Index, which lays out the voting record of every member of Congress in nonpartisan, unapologetic starkness, and you have a resource to ensure that you are forewarned — about the world as it truly is, and where the headlines of today will lead in the future. ■

STEVE BONTA
Publisher

The New American

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IS THE DOLLAR SINKING?

Peter Schiff Weighs in on the State of the Economy

AT A GLANCE

- The 2007 crisis was bad; the next one will be much worse.
- Inflation is much higher than the Trump administration is claiming.
- The next economic crisis will be a dollar and sovereign-debt crisis.
- The rise of gold and silver prices is an indicator of the dollar's weakness.

The New American publisher Steve Bonta interviewed Peter Schiff on December 18, 2025. An abridged version of their discussion follows. The full interview is available on video at thenewamerican.com.

***The New American*:** He's been called "Doctor Doom" and a lot of other things — most recently in an insult-infused Truth Social post in which President Donald Trump referred to this man as a "jerk" and a "Trump hating loser." I'm referring to eminent financial expert and stockbroker Peter Schiff.

Those in the millennial generation may not be familiar with Peter Schiff. But a generation ago, he was the guy who was warning everybody about an impending financial collapse, even as the likes of Arthur Laffer and all kinds of other Establishment economists and politicians ridiculed him and said that there was nothing wrong with the American economy. Circa 2006 and 2007, Schiff was warning that the American economy was like the *Titanic*, and saying that he was trying to get people onto lifeboats before the inevitable sinking. His execrable crime, in President Trump's view, was warning that, once again, the economy is not nearly as rosy as the current administration and many in Congress would have us believe. On a recent *Fox & Friends Weekend*, he warned that inflation figures and many other things being touted by the commander in chief and his epigones as evidence of a strong economy are not nearly as good as they appear.

So, Peter, how do you see the American

Steve Bonta is publisher of The New American.

I think that, just like during the Bush administration we were close to a financial crisis, now in the Trump administration we're close to the dollar and sovereign debt crisis, which of course will be orders of magnitude worse.

financial and economic landscape right now? How does it compare to what you were seeing back in 2006 and 2007?

Peter Schiff: Well, it's actually worse. I think that all the problems that concerned me back then are of even greater concern now. They say that history doesn't repeat, it rhymes; well, here it's more than just a rhyme. It's very eerily familiar to me because all of the same conservatives and Republican pundits that were cheerleading the economy when Bush was at the helm are doing the same thing now that it's Trump. I was having arguments with these guys, including Larry Kudlow, who's now a big cheerleader for Trump, on his show…. He was talking about how we had this "Goldilocks economy," the "greatest story never told," and how great everything was.

And he was saying these things even in early 2008, when we were in the Great Recession, because they didn't acknowledge it until the end of 2008. And then they backdated it to the end of 2007. So, all these Republicans, while we were in the middle of the Great Recession, were telling us how great the Bush economy was.

And I was warning that we were headed for this massive financial crisis, which, of course, was the case. But the problems that made that crisis inevitable and allowed me to forecast it years in advance are all there today, only greater. And that's because of everything that was done in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. Rather than allowing the market to solve the problems, the government prevented those forces from coming into play and pursued monetary and fiscal policy that actually made all those underlying problems even worse.

But what we did is, we postponed the consequences. We kicked that can down the road. Now, we were able to do that for a lot longer than I believed back then. I did not think we would get to 2025, and now 2026, without a more significant crisis than the one that we had in 2008, because the crisis that I thought would follow the financial crisis would be a dollar crisis and a sovereign-debt crisis. That didn't happen, but now I think that process has begun. And I think that, just like during the Bush administration we were close to a financial crisis, now in the Trump administration we're close to the dollar and sovereign-debt crisis, which of course will be orders of magnitude worse. And there'll be no bailouts, because the U.S. government can't bail itself out. Yes, it could bail out people who hold mortgages because it could substitute its own credit and print money that foreign central banks were eager to hold on to. But now that central banks are dumping their dollars and buying gold, and inflation is already well above the Fed's so-called two-percent target, I don't think that this is going to work again as far as kicking the can down the road.

So, I think this crisis is going to hit, and it's going to be much, much worse because of the fact that there won't be any way for the government to mitigate the damage. And to the extent that they try — and they probably will — it'll just make everything worse, because when they go back to larger-scale quantitative easing, they'll just fuel the inflation fire that's already burning hot. They'll accelerate the decline of the dollar and the rise in long-term interest rates, and everything will just implode. And we're finally going to have to pay the piper for decades of monetary and fiscal excesses.

***TNA*:** A lot of people look at inflation in very simplistic terms: We simply print money and discharge it into the economy. But of course, one of the realities of secular inflation is what's called "financialization," which is the over-complexification of finances. This can conceal for a while, from all but the most astute observers, the effects of inflating the money supply. And this is what happened in the run-up to the last great financial crisis; nobody knew where all that debt was, and derivatives had become fantastically complex. So what are we seeing now? What kinds of symptoms of financialization are there that are serving to conceal, for the time being, this underlying reality?

Schiff: Well, cryptocurrencies are just one of many bubbles that have been inflated during this time period when money was so cheap, and it may be the most irrational of the bubbles. The only thing rational about it is that you do need an alternative to dollars. That part of the Bitcoin narrative is correct, and a lot of the criticism leveled against fiat currency by Bitcoin pumpers is accurate. Where they diverge from reality is when they recommend Bitcoin as some kind of alternative, some kind of superior-solution safe haven, when what they should be advocating is gold. And if they like the idea of transacting on a blockchain, they could be advocating for tokenized gold. I have no issues with that. But what they're doing is just a mania. People have, of course, gotten rich who got into this Ponzi early and who have been cashing out for the last several years…. But all this is going to end in tears, and you're going to have millions and millions of people who are going to be

Post
Peter Schiff
@PeterSchiff
Since Pres. Trump called me a jerk and a loser for claiming that prices are still rising when he insists they're coming way down, I challenge him, or his designee, to a debate on the U.S. economy and the efficacy of his policies. If I'm as wrong as he says I am, let him prove it.
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Peter Schiff

The New American

completely wiped out in Bitcoin. Yes, the winners are the ones that got in and then got out. The only way to make money in Bitcoin is by selling it. You have to find a sucker to buy it from you, otherwise you're the sucker who gets caught holding the bag.

The real symptoms of the problem are the massive budget deficits that are now approaching $40 trillion, our $2- or $3-trillion-a-year budget deficits that are accumulating in the national debt, the trillion-dollar-a-year-plus trade deficits that seem to hit new record highs every year despite the protectionist tariffs. Our trade deficits are going up. They went up every year Trump was president, even though he campaigned against the trade deficits. They got worse every year during his first term, and they're getting worse again.

But also look at the hollowing out not only of our industry, but of our labor force. Look at all the Americans that are no longer in the labor force — and it's not because they're so wealthy that they don't have to work; they are detached from the labor force because they can't find a job. And so they're permanently out of the labor force, or they settle for multiple part-time jobs rather than a full-time job. And they're barely making ends meet. That's why we keep going from one one-term president to another one-term president, because the voters constantly want to throw the bums out, because everything keeps getting worse. The same thing is going to happen in 2028. I think we're going to get a radical-left president like an Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, because voters are going to be very frustrated by how much worse conditions are than when Trump was elected.

Nothing irritates the voters more than to have the president brag about how great the economy is when they know how lousy it is because they're actually living in it. Meanwhile, Trump is going to be throwing lavish balls in his brand-new ballroom, which he's erected to turn the White House into a palace so that he can hold court as if he were royalty.

***TNA*:** Trump addressed the nation December 17 in a Christmas address. There was a sort of perverse irony to the fact that he doled out Santa Claus-like promises while surrounded by Christmas paraphernalia in the Oval Office. He also claimed that wages are now rising much faster than inflation, that prices are falling drastically, that 100 percent of all jobs created since his inauguration this second time have been in the private sector, and that companies are coming back to the United States in record numbers. And moreover, he has inaugurated new policies that he says will reduce drug costs by up to 600 percent. That's a sampling of what he had to say. Care to comment?

Schiff: Well, look, I don't know if the president is just lying or if he's delusional. But none of this stuff is true. It's all false, whether Trump believes it himself. Obviously, prices are not coming down. You could probably point to some prices that have come down, but on balance, overall prices have gone up. Even the Consumer Price Index acknowledges that; they're clearly not coming down if the CPI is rising by three percent a year. But of course, if the CPI acknowledges that prices are up by three percent, they're probably up by at least five or six percent, because it understates it by a considerable margin.

I doubt you could find many Americans who would agree with the president that everything is coming down substantially. The president's approval ratings right now on the economy are the lowest they've ever been. They're even lower

than they were at any point during his first term. And why would that be? If things were as great as the president claims, why isn't he getting credit for that?

When he ran against Kamala Harris, he claimed that the economy was lousy. When Harris was saying how great it was, it was the same lie. And that's how Trump won the first time when he ran against Hillary Clinton. She was trying to run on a continuation of the Obama economy.

And what did Trump say? "This is phony. The numbers are fake, don't believe the unemployment numbers. They're not real, unemployment is 15 percent, 20 percent." Every time he spoke, the figure was higher. I think he even got up to 30 percent at one point. But when he said the government is lying to you about the economy, the voters thought, "Yeah, you're right."

Trump promised to drain the swamp and fix it, but the minute he became president he touted those same fake statistics as if they were real, to take credit for how great everything was. The fake jobs numbers became real jobs numbers the minute they were his jobs numbers. But when they were Obama's, they were fake.

A lot of it comes from the marketer in Trump. He's a promoter. If you look at a lot of the companies that he had, it was all about branding and promotion. And so, he's branding himself. He's the product, right? The president. And so how is he going to sell the Trump presidency to the public? Well, the same way he sold Trump Steaks. He said, "These are the greatest steaks in the world." Do you think they were the greatest steaks? Probably not, but that's how he sold them — they're the greatest. So, you know, he's the greatest, the economy is the greatest. He said that when Biden was president we had the worst economy in history. Now Trump's been president for a year, and we have the "greatest economy in history." How can it go from being the worst to the best in such a short period of time? In fact, he began declaring that we had the greatest economy in the history of the world within a couple of months of being elected.

So obviously he just says stuff, right? But whether he believes it himself or whether he knows he's lying, who knows?

People don't criticize him. People don't call him out. The Republican Party stands behind this guy because he's got a lot of political support, and this is going to be the ruination of the party.

***TNA*:** Well, Peter, certainly there are plenty of intelligent people, in Washington and on Wall Street and so forth, who are aware of the things that you're saying, aware of the debt precipice that we're on, aware of the long-term consequences of an inflationary economy, aware of all the rest of it — and yet they persist in it because somebody is benefiting.

Schiff: Look, a big part of the reason Donald Trump got elected was Elon Musk. Not only did Elon Musk pour tens of millions of dollars of his own money into the campaign and use his platform X/Twitter to promote the president's campaign, but he was also sold as a package deal, as in a vote for Trump is a vote for Elon, because he's going to come in and clean up the mess. He's going to have this Department of Government Efficiency, and he's going to cut billions, because Elon Musk said the problem is the spending and the debt and we've got to control the spending and the debt. And a lot of people said, "Yes, we want that duo. We want Trump and Elon." Initially, there was a lot of fanfare. Elon comes to Washington. He's got his little kid on his shoulders. He's rolled up his sleeves. He's got all his guys at the White House. Before you know it, they're all gone. The minute he wanted to cut anything, it was, "Okay, forget about this." Elon Musk thought it was real. For Donald Trump it was just part of the Trump show — I've got to get the votes of people who want a fiscally responsible government, well I'm going to pretend I'm fiscally responsible. But the minute he gets into office, all that is gone. They didn't want to cut anything, and they haven't cut anything. They just lie and pretend that they've cut stuff.

Government is bigger today than it was under Biden. It's more expensive today than it was under Biden. Now, obviously, the same thing would be true if Kamala Harris had won, because that's the trajectory that we're on, but Donald Trump has done nothing to derail this train from going off the edge of a cliff. We have bigger deficits now, and we're going to have even higher inflation. Donald Trump says, "Look, I inherited this mess." But Biden inherited that mess from him. I mean, Trump created the inflation that reared its head in 2021. All that inflation, that 9.1 percent? That's on Trump, because the money that was created, that fueled that inflation, happened under his watch. He signed off on all the stimulus, the extended unemployment benefits. All the deficit spending that the Fed monetized in 2020 showed up in consumer prices in 2021. In fact, if you look at the CPI, it was the last few months of Trump's administration where it really started to spike.

If you annualize the last three or four months of Trump's first term in office, you

Elon Musk thought it was real. For Donald Trump it was just part of the Trump show — I've got to get the votes of people who want a fiscally responsible government, well I'm going to pretend I'm fiscally responsible.

get high inflation. And that trend continued throughout Biden's first year. A lot of the big numbers happened in January, February, March, but Biden's programs hadn't even been passed yet; they hadn't even taken effect. So you can't hang all that on Biden. Not that Biden didn't make the problem worse, but he didn't create the problem. And Trump didn't either. He inherited a problem from Obama, who inherited one from Bush. They've been passing the baton on problems.

***TNA*:** So, Peter, our readers would like to know concretely what this coming collapse, a Great Recession 2.0, looks like. I know [real-estate website] Redfin, for example, is predicting a great reset in housing and real estate next year, although they make it sound relatively benign, nothing more than younger millennials and Gen Z types having to move home and live with their parents, and renting rather than buying houses. But I'm getting the feeling that you foresee something a good deal more calamitous.

Schiff: Yeah. Redfin is just discussing a degradation in our standard of living in that, rather than people being able to afford their own home, they're just going to have to make do with sharing it with roommates or other families. So we'll take these single-family homes and turn them into duplexes or quadplexes. Young children will stay living with their parents maybe up into their 30s or 40s, or maybe older parents will move back in with their grown children, so we'll have multiple generations occupying the same housing units.

And people won't turn the air conditioners on, they'll just open up the windows. They won't use their heat, they'll just wear sweaters around the house. There are a lot of ways that we can cope with a falling standard of living. But that's basically the reality that they are acknowledging. And this is happening because of government, because the burden of government is getting bigger and bigger and bigger.

You know, when Donald Trump said that he passed the greatest tax cut in history with the Big Beautiful Bill, that was a lie. It wasn't a tax cut. It was a tax hike because the Big Beautiful Bill made government bigger and more expensive. And that is the tax, right? It's what government spends that has to be paid for. It doesn't matter what they collect officially in income taxes or tariffs or payroll taxes, the cost of government is what government spends. The way a lot of Americans are paying for bigger government is through higher inflation and higher prices. And since government is now a lot bigger, prices are going a lot higher.

But I think what this crisis is going to look like is, again, a dollar crisis and a sovereign-debt crisis. I think we're going to see a big increase in consumer prices and a lot of upward pressure on long-term interest rates. This is going to be a huge problem for a country that is used to cheap money and cheap goods. We're not built for expensive goods and expensive money, so this is going to be a complete meltdown.

And the problem is that the public is going to blame capitalism, it's going to blame a lot of the things that Trump supposedly stands for, and it's going to look to the Bernie Sanderses, the AOCs, the Zohran Mamdanis, who say, "Capitalism is bad. Look what it did. Look at the greedy businesses, how they wrecked the economy. We need government to step in here and take over and control the economy, and take out the greedy businessmen and all these evil profiteers. We need to run the economy for the benefit of everybody."

***TNA*:** I fear that we may have to ultimately tread the road that Argentina trod for many generations to learn these hard truths. Most people only learn from experience. Argentina, and much of Latin America, seems to be swinging around to the view that no matter what the socialists say, they're lying; don't believe them. I don't think we're anywhere near that in this country. We're still too easily beguiled, as the recent New York City elections show, I think.

Schiff: Certainly. And also because things haven't gotten bad enough. Yes, things have gotten worse for the average American. They're struggling to pay the bills. They're in debt. Maybe they're working multiple jobs. But, you know, in the scheme of things, life is still not that bad. But it can get so much worse, and it will get so much worse.

And I think it has to get a lot worse in order to have a real revolution, like they have in Argentina, and reject those empty promises. Because the Argentines have been spoon-fed those promises for generations, and at this point, they don't want it anymore. They're done. There's nothing that they haven't heard before, and they know that it's an empty promise. And they're willing to try the alternative.

***TNA*:** The amazing thing about Argentina is, it's all ages that support President Javier Milei. It's not just idealistic youth that sup-

I think what this crisis is going to look like is, again, a dollar crisis and a sovereign debt crisis. I think we're going to see a big increase in consumer prices and a lot of upward pressure on long-term interest rates.

Truth Details
2598 replies
Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump
Why would Fox and Friends Weekend (of all things?) put on a "Stockbroker" named Peter Schiff, a Trump hating loser who has already proven to be wrong. Either the show made a mistake, or it is heading in a different direction. He thinks prices are going up when, in fact, they are coming substantially down. Gasoline hit $1.99 a gallon yesterday, in certain states, and is down BIG since Biden. Other prices are almost all down. Biden caused the AFFORDABILITY CRISIS, I'M FIXING IT, along with everything else! Much of it, like the Border, is already fixed. Check out the "booker" who put this jerk on!
4.9k ReTruths 18.2k Likes
Dec 06, 2025 at 6:31 AM
White House

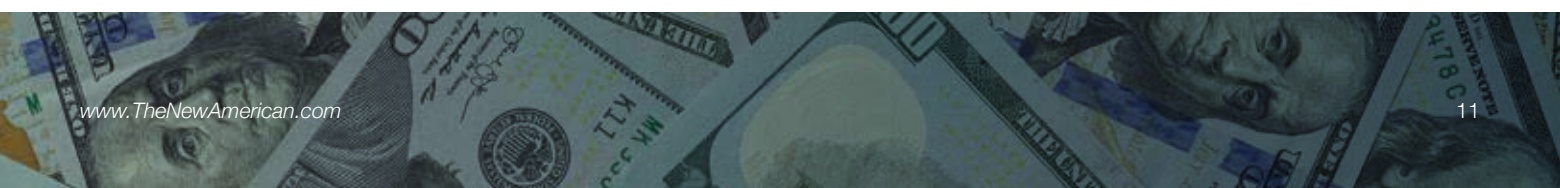
port him and his libertarianism. It's people in their 70s and 80s who've never known anything else, who are also saying, yeah, this is what we need, because they've lived through multiple economic collapses, like the one in 2001, where the whole country fell apart and it was virtual anarchy.

Schiff: And, you know, the thing is, a lot of people think that Trump is like our Milei, but he's not even close. Initially, when he first came in, I think Milei gave him a chainsaw, so he could take a chainsaw to government. He didn't take a chainsaw to anything. And so, even though there's some mutual respect there — Trump tries to champion Milei and Argentina, and the other way around — they're not the same. They're very different. You could say they were both outsiders, although Trump, when he ran for reelection, wasn't really an outsider because he had already been the president. But when he ran the first time, he was trying to drain the swamp and clean stuff up. And that's what Milei was elected to do. But the difference is that Milei actually did it. And Milei actually has a philosophical alignment with free markets and libertarians. Trump doesn't have any of that. Trump philosophically is probably more of a Democrat than a Republican anyway. But he's very much a populist. People say, "Oh, Trump is pro-business." Well, in a way, but he's not pro-free-market capitalism. He wants to have a heavy hand in business. He wants to help micromanage companies. He wants to direct capital to the industries or the companies that he thinks are important. And somebody who understands capitalism doesn't want to do that. Even if you think you're smart, if you're the president you still don't make those decisions, because you can't make decisions with other people's money the way you make them with your own money.

In capitalism, if I invest my own money, I bear the consequences if the investment goes bad. But if I'm the president and I direct taxpayer money to something, it's no skin off my behind if the thing goes bust. Plus, the president could be motivated by political things. He might think, "I'm going to fund this company because of some deal that I made, to get some kind of cut or to pay back somebody." So, you have so much graft and corruption when you have government involved in business, which is why government needs to stay out. But Trump is more involved in private business than any president ever, I think.

***TNA*:** Trump is claiming — and he claimed again December 17 — that many American companies are rushing to re-shore because of the tariffs and other things.

Schiff: They're not rushing to do anything. He threw out a number. He said that he's already secured like $17 trillion in investments. That's like two-thirds of our GDP. He hasn't secured anything. People tell him stuff that he wants to hear, so he can tout it. There was that one clip where he was sitting at a table with Mark Zuckerberg, and Zuckerberg whispered, "How much do you want me to say? What's the number you want me to use?" So it's all B.S. The reason that we don't have factories in America right now is because it's not competitive. It would be too expensive to make the stuff here. And so, if they're not going to build the factories here … even if the tariffs made it more economical to build stuff here, it still wouldn't be viable, because the prices would be too high for the consumers to buy. Why would you put a factory in America where you can't export anything? Because the only place



AP Photo/Nam Y. Huh

Steve Bonta interviews Peter Schiff.

The New American

the stuff would be viable is in America, where it was protected from competition. It makes no sense for foreign companies to invest, especially since the factories that they would build could take two or three years to construct. Who knows if the tariffs will still be here? There's a good chance the Supreme Court strikes them down anyway, because they are unconstitutional. But even if the tariffs stay for a few years, who knows what the next administration is going to do? Who wants to take that chance? Are you going to build a factory and invest billions or trillions of dollars collectively in a factory that could be rendered completely useless by the change of a tariff? Because Trump could back away from the tariffs at a moment's notice — all of a sudden he changes his mind. So this is not going to happen.

Manufacturing jobs continue to go away; we've lost manufacturing jobs since Trump was elected. We haven't gained more manufacturing. This is all part of the lie that he spreads when he's trying to fool everybody into thinking that we've got this great, great economy, when the factories aren't going to come back. In fact, if anything, we're making what's left of our manufacturing even less competitive, because a lot of the parts that they have to import are now tariffed, so they're more expensive. So, the finished product is more expensive. And of course, not only would foreigners have to deal with all these costs of building a factory here, but what about the workers? Who's going to train the workers? And who wants to hire Americans anyway when you can get sued eight ways from Sunday? You think they want to come over here and risk getting sued for discrimination or sexual harassment or who knows what? Why would you want to do that to yourself? We have some horrible laws that allow just about anybody to shake down his employer, and other high regulatory burdens and taxes. And what about the supply chains? What about all that distribution? None of that stuff exists. How are you going to recreate that stuff? Because if you just have a factory, what's going to supply it?

So, this is just a pipe dream. Now, yes, I would like to see industry come back to America, but it needs to come back for the right reasons, and it needs to come back over time. It needs to come back because we make dramatic cuts to government spending and regulation, because Americans save again, because we have higher interest rates and because we have savings so that we can afford to make the capital investments to build the factories that no longer exist.

We have to turn all of our strip malls into factories, because otherwise there's going to be nothing to sell when we can't import, which is going to happen.

I think the dollar is in the process of losing its reserve status, and that's why gold is soaring. And it's going to keep going up, and the dollar is going to tank, and then we're going to lose access to all these products. They're going to be out of reach, they're going to be unaffordable for most Americans.

***TNA*:** Well, Peter, we're running short on time. Just one more question: In practical terms, what should people be doing to prepare for this eventuality?

Schiff: Well, they should be doing what I'm doing, and what I'm advising my clients and my customers to do. One thing is to buy gold

Tangtong/Adobe Stock

and silver. I've been buying gold for clients since it was under $300 an ounce; it's now over $4,000. I've been buying silver since it was under $5; it's now over $65. Gold has outperformed the S&P 500, including dividends, over the last 25 years. That's telling you that the stock-market gains are an illusion created by inflation. If you measure stock prices in real money, they're going down, they're not going up. So people should own gold and silver, and I help them buy it at a good price, at a low price above spot, at my company Schiff Gold.

The other thing that I'm doing personally and with my clients at my company Euro Pacific Asset Management is investing abroad. I'm investing in international dividend-paying stocks in emerging markets, and in companies that own a lot of resources, whether it's the precious-metals mining companies, or industrial metals — copper, nickel, and zinc — or oil and gas companies, or agriculture companies; companies that are going to benefit from inflation, that have pricing power, that sell the goods and services that people really need and that they'll pay higher prices to get; and companies that earn money and pay good dividends. And more importantly, where the dividends are coming in currencies that are going to gain purchasing power that the dollar loses. Those are the companies you want to invest in.

This is going to be a massive transfer of wealth and purchasing power from Americans to the rest of the world. Now, the rest of the world is not going to benefit equally. Some countries will benefit a lot more than others, and that's where we want to concentrate our investments. We want to own the assets that will gain the most as the dollar assets lose.

We want to own the currencies that will gain the most purchasing power as the U.S. dollar loses. We want to align ourselves with the winners, and, unfortunately, it's not the U.S. Now, politically I can root for the U.S., I can try my best to help solve the problems. But I don't want to go broke as I'm rooting for the loser and the politicians continue to implement policies that I know are destructive.

And it's not just the politicians, it's the central bankers; they're the prime architects of this, the Fed. And now Trump wants to put an even worse guy at the helm of that. He said, "I want somebody who likes low interest rates." Well, what if we need high interest rates? But we're going to have low interest rates. Trump wants to put an inflationist in charge, he wants somebody who will crank the printing presses. That's not what Americans should want, but, unfortunately, that's what we're going to get. And that's why you've got to get out. You've got to get out of the currency that they're printing, and you've got to get into what they can't print. And that's gold and silver and these dividend-paying foreign stocks.

***TNA*:** Thank you so much, Peter Schiff. It's been very luminous and informative, and I really appreciate your taking the time with us today.

Schiff: My pleasure; thanks a lot. ■

Publisher's Note: In addition to saving and investing prudently, Americans should support efforts to restore the gold and silver currency standard required by our Constitution, and should encourage their legislators to co-sponsor legislation to end the Federal Reserve system.

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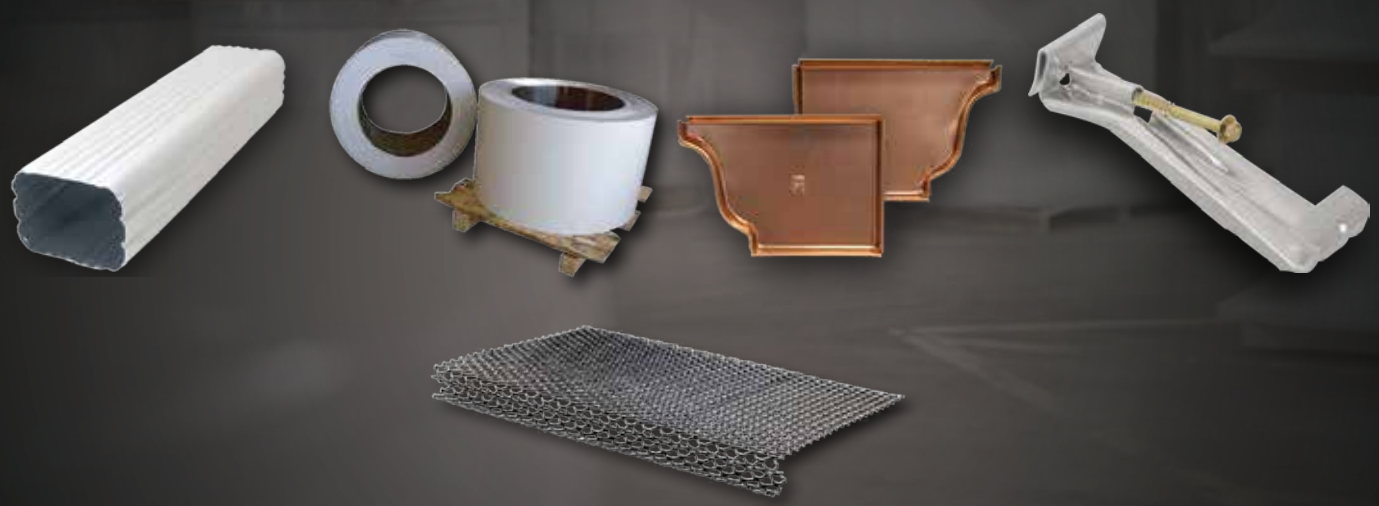

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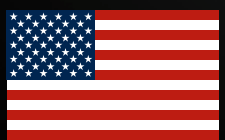

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QUICK QUOTES

"Once that kind of cancer goes that far afield, the odds of survival are less than one percent, and the median life expectancy is three months.… My insurance company spent $1.2 million on me, with traditional means, before I switched to a $5-a-week medicine that actually saved me."
An ABC News affiliate in Edmond, Oklahoma, interviewed local resident **Joe Tippen**, *who suffered from stage 4 small-cell lung cancer and said he turned to dog dewormer fenbendazole when allopathic models failed. He is now cancer-free.*

"Because of the tariffs, we've taken in more than $18 trillion. There's never been anything like it. As an example, the previous administration — Sleepy Joe Biden — took in less than $1 trillion in four years. We took in more than $18 trillion in 10 months. That's good!"
President **Donald Trump** *addressed press from the White House in December.*

"California is the national security risk. They're getting 60-percent-plus … of oil in California imported from foreign countries. Iraq's at the top of the list. They're shipping it from halfway around the world to run the largest fleet of internal combustion cars in the country in California."
U.S. Interior Secretary **Doug Burgum** *made this revelation on Fox News while discussing how blue states skew average gas prices.*

"Trying to give the incapacitated vegetable, particularly during the debate on Thursday, a talking point to push back on Trump on this issue."
John Solomon of Just the News on Real America's Voice revealed the contents of an email obtained through a FOIA request. In it, former CIA director **Mike Morell** *asked fellow director John Brennan to sign on to the now-infamous letter from 51 intel officials who claimed that Hunter Biden's laptop was Russian misinformation.*

"So we are fighting against an organized gang called Empire of George Soros — NGOs who are just supporting everybody who is transgressing our legal system and our regulation, and financing illegal activity against our nation."
During a 2024 press conference, Hungarian Prime Minister **Viktor Orbán** *read aloud from George Soros' 2015 comprehensive plan to attack Christian nationalism in Europe by flooding her nations with "asylum seekers," and summarized it as above.*

"People need to understand that they are likely drinking other people's abortions. Do you really need a test to determine that it's a bad idea to flush placenta, tissue, blood and human remains into our waterways?"
Politico *quoted Students for Life Action's vice president of media and policy,* **Kristi Hamrick**, *whose organization is lobbying the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to add chemical abortion pills to its list of drinking-water contaminants.*

"If this is true, then Omar faces criminal liability under three different statutes: federal marriage fraud … state incest laws … [and] tax fraud."
U.S. Senator **Ted Cruz** *(R-Texas) commented on social media about charges that U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) married her brother so he could immigrate to the United States.*

— Compiled by Rebecca Terrell

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The National Security State and the American Cultural Revolution

Photo by Zach Roberts/NurPhoto via AP

AT A GLANCE

- America is threatened by a Marxist-inspired "Cultural Revolution."
- Fully funded activist groups present themselves as fighting for separate causes, but in reality form a single revolutionary bloc.
- January 6 was the planned inflection point that allowed the bureaucratic and activist alliance to declare open season on conservative and religious Americans.
- There must be a national effort to educate the public about the patterns, methods, and vocabulary of Marxist and neo-Marxist movements.

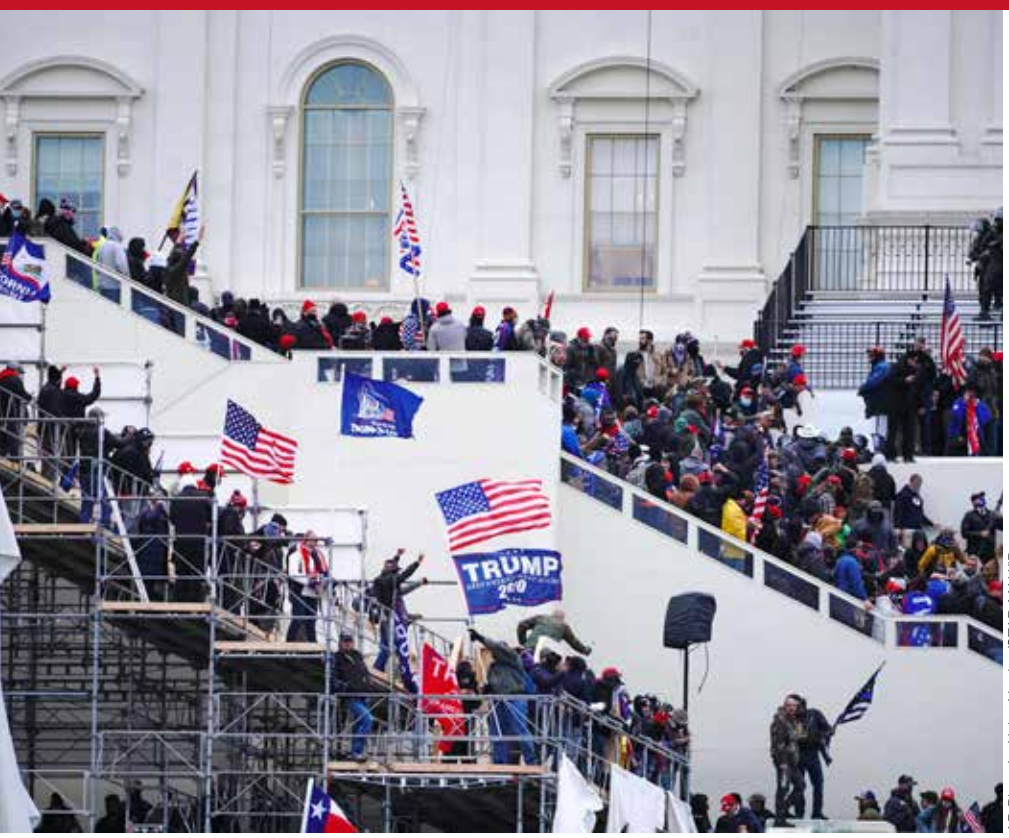
by General Michael T. Flynn (Ret.)

The American people have just taken their first full breath after surviving an attempt to smother the Republic through a Marxist-inspired cultural campaign carried out largely through the administrative state, media, academia, and politicized elements of the national security bureaucracy. Most Americans did not fully perceive it while it was happening. Many in the intelligence community either passively accepted it or actively furthered it. While the architects of this project are not finished, their effort has been damaged and delayed. It is only by the grace of God that the country has endured to this point.

The American Cultural Revolution is distinct from the one that ravaged China under Mao Zedong. It did not coalesce around a single, charismatic revolutionary figure. Instead, it spread along the arteries of bureaucracy, higher education, corporate structures, and activist networks. The long march through the institutions, as described by Antonio Gramsci, became the operational template. Rather than having our streets filled with Red Guards under the orders of an identifiable supreme leader, the United States experienced a coordinated convergence of agencies, NGOs, foundations, media outlets, and activist fronts, all advancing the same ideological project under different labels.

Because federal agencies differ widely in size, mission, culture, and internal resistance to revolutionary change, this revolution unfolded unevenly. It never achieved total dominance in a single decisive stroke. Instead, it advanced by fragmentary gains and suffered fragmentary

Lieutenant General Michael T. Flynn, U.S. Army (Ret.), served in the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars and as head of the Defense Intelligence Agency. After retiring from the military, he served briefly as President Donald Trump's first national security advisor.



AP Photo/zz/John Nacion/STAR MAX/IPx

defeats. Wherever the ideological project captured a human resources department, a training pipeline, a public-school system, or a central media platform, it encountered resistance in state governments, independent media, individual courts, and networks of courageous patriots who refused to comply. This piecemeal quality of implementation slowed the revolution and gave the American people time to see what was happening and respond.

Even as these battles played out in public, darker currents moved beneath the surface. We now know that thousands of religious and conservative federal employees were quietly identified and referred to a little-known federal entity, the Pretrial Services Agency. Accounts and initial documentation indicate that this agency may have been used to catalog individuals solely on the basis of ideology and religious conviction, their involvement in the January 6, 2021 Capitol protests, and Covid vaccine refusal. The intention appears to have been not only administrative removal, but also potential criminalization. This matter demands immediate, transparent investigation by any future administration that claims to be serious about the rule of law.

Revolutionary Organization

To better understand how the American Cultural Revolution is being carried out, it is necessary to examine its operational structure. There is a constellation of fully funded, professional activist groups that present themselves as fighting for separate causes, when in reality they form a single revolutionary bloc. Over the last decade, organizations under the banners of anti-fascism, racial justice, radical feminism, abortion on demand, certain LGBTQ+ factions, environmental extremism, and gun-control advocacy have shown remarkable cohesion. They share donors, staff, narrative frameworks, and street-level tactics. Their membership overlaps. Their messaging is synchronized. They rapidly support one another's campaigns and protests.

While these groups present themselves as grassroots movements, they function much more like a professional revolutionary caste. Their core is composed not of ordinary volunteer citizens, but of trained activists who treat agitation as a full-time occupation. They are funded by a mix of private foundations, wealthy donors, and, in some cases, federal and state resources. They serve as the street and digital arm of a broader ideological project whose goal is not reform, but transformation. They are bound together by a worldview that is explicitly revolutionary and implicitly Marxist, even if many of their foot soldiers do not use that language.

Within this structure, the concept of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) plays a central role. DEI is not a harmless corporate fad. It is a cultural and psychological weapon system. In practice, DEI training and enforcement operates as a mechanism for behavioral conditioning, using guilt, struggle sessions, and the constant threat of social or professional punishment to bring individuals into line. The language of microaggressions, privilege, and sys-

The aftermath of January 6, the collapse of Afghanistan after the disastrous U.S. withdrawal, and the federal vaccine mandates combined in an unprecedented attempt to remake the federal workforce through coercion, intimidation, and ideological purification.

temic bias functions as a soft form of ideological policing. It compels people to monitor their speech, second-guess their instincts, and submit to an ever-expanding set of forbidden words and mandatory rituals.

This is not inclusion. It is coerced conformity disguised as virtue. The outcomes within institutions are fear, silence, and self-censorship. People learn quickly that they cannot ask certain questions, state certain facts, or acknowledge certain perspectives without risking their careers. This is not an accidental side effect; it is the goal. If you can compel people to lie about obvious realities in public, you control them. DEI is therefore best understood as a domestic application of political re-education, aligned with Marxist and neo-Marxist approaches to cultural change.

AP Photo/Mary Conlon

Red Washing

"Red washing" is the term we use for the systematic erasure of material that exposes Marxism's history, tactics, and consequences. When civics and traditional American history are removed from curricula and replaced with grievance narratives, the ground is prepared for a new ideology. When the record of socialist atrocities is buried or dismissed, entire generations lose the ability to recognize patterns that their grandparents would have seen immediately. This did not happen accidentally. Higher education, media, and entertainment became primary targets for this rewriting of memory.

By 2020, the United States had been subjected to decades of this cultural reshaping. The country entered that year already weakened and divided. The combined impact of the global Covid 19 "pandemic," a Chinese Communist Party disinformation campaign, and unprecedented civil unrest brought the country to a state of exhaustion. Law enforcement was undermanned and demoralized. The medical system was stretched to the limit. Schools at every level were shuttered or reduced to online only. The basic functions that distinguish a first-world nation were placed under siege.

These conditions were ideal for revolutionary actors who understood the Bolshevik concept of the "spark." In Mao's China, youth brigades became instruments of chaos once police authority had been stripped and traditional structures weakened. In the United States, policies calling for the defunding and delegitimizing of police, combined with political protection for rioters, produced something similar in concept. The rolling riots of 2020 were not a spontaneous eruption; they were a conditioning phase, designed to destroy public confidence in institutions, normalize political violence from the Left, and set the emotional stage for a more-targeted crisis.

That crisis came on January 6, 2021. Here, the doctrine of moderated violence is essential to understand. This tactic seeks to provoke an adversary into a desperate or unwise act that can then be weaponized to justify a crackdown. For a year, Americans watched their cities burn and were told it was "mostly peaceful." Then, in a single day, a protest on Capitol grounds was framed as an "insurrection," an existential threat to "democracy." This narrative laid the moral foundation for a years-long campaign of arrests, surveillance, and persecution. The Left's riots stopped instantly. The narrative flipped overnight. That abrupt shift reveals design, not coincidence.

January 6 was the planned inflection point that allowed the bureaucratic and activist alliance to declare open season on conservative and religious Americans. It became the lens through which all dissent could be labeled dangerous and disloyal. The people who entered the Capitol that day, many of them peaceful and bewildered, became pawns in a broader project aimed at remaking the national security apparatus from within.

What came next moved beyond street-level activism or cultural capture — it entered the bloodstream of the national security state. The aftermath of January 6, the collapse of Afghanistan after the disastrous U.S. withdrawal, and the federal vaccine mandates combined in an unprecedented attempt to remake the federal workforce through coercion, intimidation, and ideological purification. Inside the CIA and across the national security apparatus, the internal revolution reached its apex and then began to fracture under its own contradictions.

Societal collapse is never a singular event. It is a process.

U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021

AP Photo/Shekib Rahmani, File

Federal Purges

The aftermath of January 6 must be understood in tandem with the Biden administration's withdrawal from Afghanistan and federal vaccine mandates. Together, they formed the operational center of a three-tiered purge aimed at the heart of the American national security workforce.

Revolutions require crisis; they cannot sustain themselves solely on theory. A strategic choice must be made about where that crisis will be centered. If the battlefield is domestic, foreign crises must be controlled or terminated quickly. From this perspective, the catastrophic withdrawal from Afghanistan makes more sense. Clearing the deck internationally created space for the domestic crisis narrative around January 6 to dominate. It is plausible that the decision to accept a disastrous withdrawal was seen as an acceptable cost if it allowed the administration and its ideological allies to focus fully on remaking the internal machinery of the state. However, this does not mean that the hasty execution of the Afghanistan withdrawal did not also contribute to the weakening of U.S. security as well as the revolution at home. It did, from the loss of American prestige abroad, to the abandonment of U.S. military equipment that fell into the hands of the Taliban, to the importation of unvetted Afghans to America.

Barely a week after Afghanistan fell, vaccine mandates were announced for the entire federal workforce. From the first moment, it was clear to many inside the system that this was not primarily about public health; it was about obedience, identification, and removal. Those who refused to comply were disproportionately religious, constitutionally minded, conservative in outlook, or simply unwilling to submit to coerced medical intervention. In other words, they were the precise cohort that revolutionary ideologues view as an obstacle.

What followed across the federal government was a coordinated pattern. Agencies created religious accommodation processes that were adversarial by design. Internal systems were engineered to route almost every request toward denial. In some cases, the process itself kept changing to trap employees into noncompliance that could be framed as insubordination. Compliance numbers were falsified. Lists of noncompliant personnel were compiled. Unvaccinated officers were labeled as insider threats, a term previously used for spies, saboteurs, or those posing physical security risks. In some cases, armed officers were informed that their firearms could be taken or their positions altered based on their refusal.

Crude calculations made inside multiple agencies suggested that the administration was prepared to terminate a staggering proportion of the national security workforce. While public reporting put the number of separated service members in the thousands, internal estimates and anecdotal evidence suggest the actual impact may have been orders of magnitude greater, including forced retirements, coerced resignations, career-destroying notations, and informal blacklists. The intent appears to have been nothing less than the ideological purification of the federal apparatus under the cover of a health emergency.

Collapse Inside the CIA

The Central Intelligence Agency was not immune to this process. Within the CIA, the enforcement of mandates and the surrounding machinery of compliance bore the hallmarks of DEI-aligned activism rather than neutral personnel management. Officers who sought religious accommodations often did so at high personal and

professional cost. Many are still living with the consequences of stalled careers and hostile evaluations, and the lingering suspicion that their names remain flagged in unseen databases. Internal investigations by networks of concerned officers uncovered documentation that suggested these noncompliance lists were being shared or prepared for sharing with the Pretrial Services Agency, which, by its own description, exists to support the federal courts in managing newly arrested defendants.

If vaccine noncompliance were being linked conceptually to January 6-related offenses, a dangerous precedent would have been established. A government was effectively considering religious objection or medical autonomy a political crime. This is characteristic of regimes that have criminalized dissent, not of constitutional republics.

The vaccine mandates also degraded mission capability. Units responsible for covert action, high-risk operational training, and sensitive overseas work saw their personnel threatened with termination or sidelining. In some cases, the only way to preserve operational readiness was for entire cadres of officers to falsify their records to remain, at least on paper, compliant. This compounded the moral injury: Officers were forced to choose between betraying their conscience and lying to preserve the mission. Both choices inflicted damage.

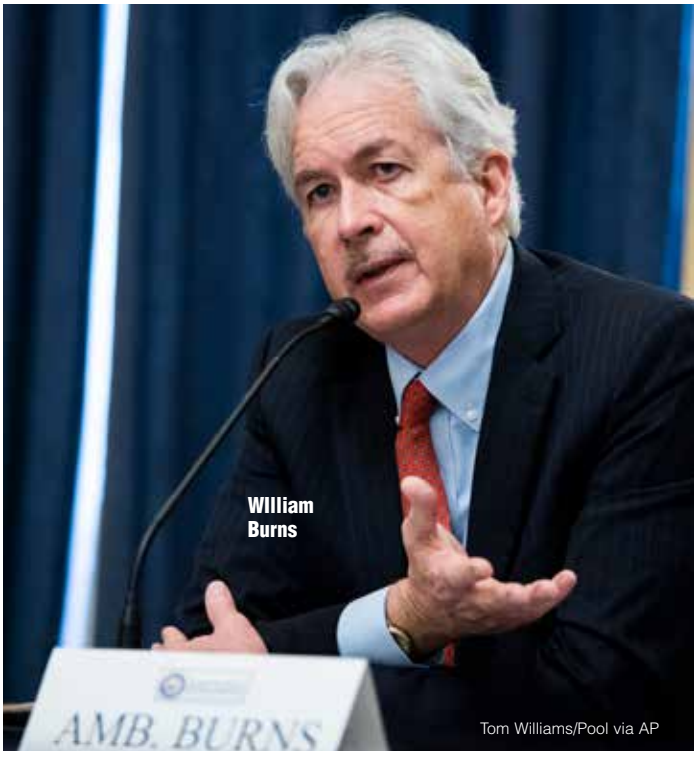
As this purge machinery ground forward, the war in Ukraine erupted. For years, Ukraine had served as a corridor for corruption, influence, and financial gamesmanship, but the sudden reality of a large-scale conventional war altered priorities. Dark-money projects and ideological crusades found themselves competing with battlefield realities, international pressure, and a complex escalation environment. It is reasonable to conclude that Russia's invasion of Ukraine disrupted the internal purge timetable in the United States. The Biden administration could no longer sustain the same level of focus on domestic ideological enforcement while managing a major foreign crisis in a theater saturated with intelligence and military assets.

Parallel to this, the DEI apparatus that had spearheaded much of the internal revolution began to show signs of fatigue and failure. The most revealing moment came in the summer of 2024 inside the CIA. At a meeting of resource groups, the senior psychologist tasked with leading DEI initiatives effectively held a referendum on the entire project. According to officers present, she launched into a furious, emotionally charged acknowledgment that DEI had failed to achieve its goals.

There was another consequence of the mandate era and the broader ideological struggle. For the first time in American history, employees from nearly every sector of the executive branch filed legal actions against their own government in large numbers. The courts were flooded with cases that pitted citizens and career civil servants against the agencies they served. This produced precisely the type of overload that foreign adversaries such as the Chinese Communist Party have long sought to engineer. Their information campaigns and influence operations have been openly aimed at overburdening American institutions. Here, ironically, the executive branch itself became the prima-

Avril Haines

AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein



William Burns

Tom Williams/Pool via AP

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ry source of the overload on the judiciary.

In strategic terms, the damage inflicted upon the United States over these years was severe, but not fatal. The revolution failed to consolidate. The purge was not fully completed. The DEI movement inside key institutions cracked under its own contradictions. Ordinary Americans resisted. A remnant inside the federal workforce refused to bow. Courts, despite all the pressure, blocked some of the most extreme measures. Reality asserted itself against ideology.

The Path to National Recovery

The question now is what must be done. The path forward requires more than outrage — it involves changes to policy and structure.

First, the architecture of the modern welfare state, which has turned large segments of the population into political clients, must be dismantled. President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and its subsequent expansions helped create a permanent dependency machine that can be weaponized for revolutionary ends. Rolling back these structures will not be easy, but it is essential if Americans are to recover a culture of responsibility, family formation, and self-government.

Second, the country must deliberately cultivate the nuclear family, childbearing, and stable communities. This is not sentimental nostalgia; it is a matter of national survival. A society that abandons marriage, parenthood, and property stewardship will not endure. Incentives, policies, and cultural signals must all point toward building households capable of raising the next generation with a sense of identity and duty.

Third, American education must be reclaimed from red-washed narratives. Teaching of civics and honest history and a clear account of the crimes of Marxist regimes must be restored. Children and young adults must understand both the promise and the fragility of ordered liberty. If they do not know what distinguishes this Republic from totalitarian systems, they will not recognize the danger until it is too late. The public schools are dumbing down the youth of America both morally and academically. Parents who still have children in the public schools can and should save them from this subversion by pulling them out in favor of private, religious, and/or home education.

Fourth, the intelligence community must be reformed so that it returns to its proper mission of defending the nation against foreign threats rather than serving as an instrument of domestic social engineering. This means rooting out politicized structures, prohibiting the use of intelligence tools against the domestic political opposition except in the narrowest and most clearly justified circumstances, and rebuilding a culture of professional, apolitical service.

Fifth, society must recover a sense of moral coherence. A nation cannot survive long when it denies reality in matters as fundamental as truth, sex, personal responsibility, and the value of human life. While America is home to many faith traditions, there must be a shared recognition that there are objective standards that cannot simply be rewritten by fashion or decree. Without this, the law becomes merely an instrument of power.

Finally, there must be a national effort to educate the public about the patterns, methods, and vocabulary of Marxist and neo-Marxist movements. This will not require witch hunts; it will require clarity. Once citizens understand how these systems operate, they are far harder to manipulate; the mask slips. The slogans no longer suffice, and the glamour of the revolution fades. For many decades, The John Birch Society has been the vanguard of the growing national effort to create sufficient understanding, and I recommend looking into this great organization at JBS.org.

There remains, inside this country and inside its battered institutions, a remnant of men and women who never surrendered. They stayed at their posts. They told the truth, quietly or openly, when it was dangerous to do so. They refused to consent to lies. They suffered for it. Their careers were derailed; their retirements were accelerated; their friendships were broken. Some were imprisoned. Many were slandered, but they are still here.

Like the Founders before them, they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, not in the abstract but in the daily grind of saying "no" to a machine that demanded their submission. The cost has been high. Yet the Republic still stands. That is not an accident. It is the fruit of Providence and the courage of ordinary people acting in extraordinary times — for the God of our fathers; for the country we inherited; for the Republic that must not fall.

The struggle is not over. But neither is the story of America. ■

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The Freedom Index

A Congressional Scorecard Based on the U.S. Constitution

Our second look at the 119th Congress shows how every member of the House and Senate voted on key issues such as digital currencies, foreign aid (House only), oil and gas drilling, and ObamaCare subsidies (Senate only).

AP Photo/Richard Drew

Genius bill? The GENIUS Act, passed by Congress and signed into law by President Donald Trump, imposes federal regulations and oversight on stablecoins, and is a backdoor to a central bank digital currency.

House Vote Descriptions

11 GENIUS Act. S. 1582, the "Guiding and Establishing National Innovation for U.S. Stablecoins (GENIUS) Act," would regulate cryptocurrency stablecoins, digital assets used as a means of payment redeemable for a fixed amount of currency. It requires stablecoin issuers to apply to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) to be a "permitted payment stablecoin issuer" and maintain 1:1 reserves in approved assets. Additionally, it empowers the Federal Reserve Board, FDIC, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, and Department of the Treasury to oversee permitted stablecoin issuers.

The House passed S. 1582 on July 17, 2025 by a vote of 308 to 122 (Roll Call 200). We have assigned pluses to the nays because the GENIUS Act expands government surveillance and control over private financial activities, creating a backdoor to a central bank digital currency. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution does not permit Congress to regulate the financial sector, and the Fourth Amendment protects individuals from unreasonable searches and unwarranted government surveillance.

12 Central Bank Digital Currency. H.R. 1919, the "Anti-CBDC Surveillance State Act," would prohibit the Federal Reserve from issuing a central bank digital currency directly to individuals or through intermediaries, bar its use as a tool of monetary policy, and prevent

About This Index

"The Freedom Index: A Congressional Scorecard Based on the U.S. Constitution" rates members of Congress based on their adherence to constitutional principles of limited government, fiscal responsibility, national sovereignty, and a traditional foreign policy of avoiding foreign entanglements. For information on the criteria we use to select the votes, go to TheFreedomIndex.org/about.

To learn how any representative or senator voted on the key measures described herein, look him or her up in the vote charts. The scores are derived by dividing a congressman's constitutional votes (pluses) by the total number he cast (pluses and minuses) and multiplying by 100. The average House score for this index is 38 percent (71 percent for the Republicans and five percent for the Democrats), and the average Senate score is 40 percent (67 percent for the Republicans and nine percent for the Democrats). Ten representatives and just one senator (Rand Paul of Kentucky) earned 100 percent. We encourage readers to examine how their own legislators voted on each of the 10 key measures. We also encourage readers to commend legislators for their constitutional votes, and to urge improvement where needed.

This is our second index for the 119th Congress. Our first index for the current Congress (votes 1-10) appeared in our August 2025 issue. An online version of The Freedom Index is also available (click on Freedom Index at TheNewAmerican.com), as are Congressional Scorecards on individual members of the House and Senate and Legislative Scorecards on state legislators (see ad on page 36). ■

House Vote Scores ✓

	Votes:	11-20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	1-20
ALABAMA													
1	Moore (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	90%
2	Figures (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	5%
3	Rogers (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
4	Aderholt (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
5	Strong (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
6	Palmer (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	80%
7	Sewell (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
ALASKA													
AL	Begich (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	85%
ARIZONA													
1	Schweikert (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
2	Crane (R)	100%	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
3	Ansari (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
4	Stanton (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
5	Biggs (R)	100%	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
6	Ciscomani (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	58%
7	Grijalva (D)										-	-	
8	Hamadeh (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	80%
9	Gosar (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	95%
ARKANSAS													
1	Crawford (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
2	Hill (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	63%
3	Womack (R)	56%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	?	+	58%
4	Westerman (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
CALIFORNIA													
1	LaMalfa (R)	67%	-	+	-	-	+	+	?	+	+	+	63%
2	Huffman (D)	11%	+	-	-	-	?	-	-	-	-	-	6%
3	Kiley (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
4	Thompson (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
5	McClintock (R)	80%	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	85%
6	Bera (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
7	Matsui (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
8	Garamendi (D)	11%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	6%
9	Harder (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
10	DeSaulnier (D)	11%	+	-	-	-	-	-	?	-	-	-	6%
11	Pelosi (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
12	Simon (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
13	Gray (D)	22%	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	?	-	+	26%
14	Swalwell (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	?	-	-	-	?	?	0%
15	Mullin (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6%
16	Liccardo (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
17	Khanna (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
18	Lofgren (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
19	Panetta (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
20	Fong (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	63%
21	Costa (D)	20%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	15%
22	Valadao (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
23	Obernolte (R)	56%	-	?	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	58%
24	Carbajal (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
25	Ruiz (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
26	Brownley (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
27	Whitesides (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	11%
28	Chu (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
29	Rivas (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
30	Friedman (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
31	Cisneros (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
32	Sherman (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
33	Aguilar (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
34	Gomez (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
35	Torres (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
36	Lieu (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
37	Kamlager-Dove (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
38	Sánchez (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
39	Takano (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
40	Kim (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
41	Calvert (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
42	Garcia (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
43	Waters (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
44	Barragán (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
45	Tran (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
46	Correa (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6%
47	Min (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
48	Issa (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
49	Levin (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
50	Peters (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
51	Jacobs (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
52	Vargas (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
COLORADO													
1	DeGette (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
2	Neguse (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
3	Hurd (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	63%
4	Boebert (R)	89%	-	+	+	+	+	?	+	+	+	+	89%
5	Crank (R)	80%	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	80%
6	Crow (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
7	Pettersen (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	0%
8	Evans (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
CONNECTICUT													
1	Larson (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
2	Courtney (D)	20%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	11%
3	DeLauro (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
4	Himes (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
5	Hayes (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
DELAWARE													
AL	McBride (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
FLORIDA													
1	Patronis (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	79%
2	Dunn (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	63%
3	Cammack (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	85%
4	Bean (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	90%
5	Rutherford (R)	50%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	?	?	+	56%
6	Fine (R)	80%	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	79%
7	Mills (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	80%
8	Haridopolos (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	65%
9	Soto (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
10	Frost (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
11	Webster (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70%
12	Bilirakis (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	68%
13	Luna (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	83%
14	Castor (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
15	Lee (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	56%
16	Buchanan (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	61%
17	Steube (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	95%
18	Franklin (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	68%

The scores are derived by dividing the constitutionally correct votes (pluses) by the total number of pluses and minuses and multiplying by 100. (A "?" means a representative did not vote. If a representative cast fewer than five votes in this index, a score is not assigned.) Match numbers at the top of the chart to House vote descriptions on pages 24, 26, and 28.

the creation of a federally controlled digital-dollar system that could enable financial surveillance, transaction censorship, and centralized control over Americans' economic lives.

The House passed H.R. 1919 on July 17, 2025 by a vote of 219 to 210 (Roll Call 201). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because Article I, Sections 8 and 10 of the Constitution state that only Congress has the power to "coin Money," referring to precious metals such as gold and silver. The Federal Reserve's fiat system already departs from these limits, and a central bank digital currency would further erode liberty by enabling constant tracking of transactions and unprecedented government surveillance and control over Americans' financial lives.

13 Foreign Aid Programs. During consideration of the fiscal 2026 defense appropriations bill (H.R. 4016), Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) offered an amendment to strike the language in the bill authorizing $118 million for overseas humanitarian, disaster, and civic aid programs.

The House rejected Greene's amendment on July 18, 2025 by a vote of 63 to 365 (Roll Call 204). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because foreign aid, not being one of the enumerated powers granted to the federal government by the Constitution, is unconstitutional. Also, as Greene pointed out on the House floor, "The American people are $37 trillion in debt. The Department of Defense's mission is to deter war and ensure our Nation's security. That is their mission, and that is exactly what their funding should be for."

14 Ukraine Assistance. During consideration of the fiscal 2026 defense appropriations bill (H.R. 4016), Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) offered an amendment stating: "None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for assistance to Ukraine."

The House rejected Greene's amendment on July 18, 2025 by a vote of 76 to 353 (Roll Call 209). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because the United States should not be interjecting itself into the Russia-Ukraine war by providing aid to one of the combatants, and should instead follow a noninterventionist foreign policy that puts America first. Moreover, Congress has not declared war as required by the Constitution for military activity.

15 Defund Renewable-energy Office. During consideration of the fiscal 2026 energy-water appropriations bill (H.R. 4553), Representative Scott Perry (R-Pa.), acting for Representative Chip Roy (R-Texas), offered an amendment to strike all funding for the now-defunct Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

The House rejected Scott's amendment on September 4, 2025 by a vote of 127 to 297 (Roll Call 236). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because Congress should end all unconstitutional federal control over the domestic energy sector, in accordance with Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution. The push for a "green" or "renewable" economy is part of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seeks to implement extreme "climate change" policies. It is nothing other than a fanatical attempt by globalist elites to increase their taxing authority. Rather than undermining American sovereignty, energy independence, and free-market principles, Congress must refrain from exercising regulatory powers that the 10th Amendment reserves to the "States respectively, or to the people."

16 Taxpayer-funded Sex Changes. During consideration of the fiscal 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 3838), Representative Nancy Mace (R-S.C.) offered an amendment to prohibit the Department of Defense from covering or providing "gender-related medical treatment" under TRICARE.

The House adopted Mace's amendment on September 10, 2025 by a vote of 221 to 207 (Roll Call 246). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because Congress has every duty to forbid grossly illicit acts of sexual perversion in the armed forces. Members of the Military Health System have no right to undergo or perform "gender-affirming" treatment, let alone force taxpayers to pay for it through the federal TRICARE program. Sex mutilation is a grotesque practice that not only violates the "unalienable" right to life and limb, but absurdly conflates biological sex with fictional "gender identity" constructs. Since the Obama administration, "gender-neutral" policies have been used to socially engineer an effeminate and subversive culture in the armed forces,

AP Photo/Julia Demaree Nikhinson

America First: Foreign aid is unconstitutional and contradicts a traditional foreign policy of noninterventionism. Now-former U.S. Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) introduced multiple amendments to legislation that would have cut foreign aid.

	Votes:	11-20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	1-20
19	Donalds (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	85%
20	Cherfilus-McCormick (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
21	Mast (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	63%
22	Frankel (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	0%
23	Moskowitz (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
24	Wilson (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6%
25	Wasserman Schultz (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
26	Diaz-Balart (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
27	Salazar (R)	67%	-	+	?	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	61%
28	Gimenez (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
GEORGIA													
1	Carter (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
2	Bishop (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10%
3	Jack (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	75%
4	Johnson (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
5	Williams (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
6	McBath (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
7	McCormick (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	75%
8	Scott (R)	80%	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	70%
9	Clyde (R)	80%	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	90%
10	Collins (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	85%
11	Loudermilk (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
12	Allen (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
13	Scott (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
14	Greene (R)	100%	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	95%
HAWAII													
1	Case (D)	20%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	15%
2	Tokuda (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
IDAHO													
1	Fulcher (R)	100%	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	90%
2	Simpson (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	61%
ILLINOIS													
1	Jackson (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
2	Kelly (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
3	Ramirez (D)	13%	+	-	?	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	6%
4	García (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
5	Quigley (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	?	-	-	-	-	-	0%
6	Casten (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
7	Davis (D)	11%	+	-	-	-	?	-	-	-	-	-	6%
8	Krishnamoorthi (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
9	Schakowsky (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
10	Schneider (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	?	-	-	-	-	0%
11	Foster (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
12	Bost (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70%
13	Budzinski (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
14	Underwood (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
15	Miller (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	90%
16	LaHood (R)	63%	-	+	-	-	+	?	?	+	+	+	61%
17	Sorensen (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
INDIANA													
1	Mrvan (D)	22%	+	-	-	-	-	?	-	-	-	+	11%
2	Yakym (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
3	Stutzman (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	80%
4	Baird (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
5	Spartz (R)	78%	-	+	-	?	+	+	+	+	+	+	83%
6	Shreve (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
7	Carson (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
8	Messmer (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
9	Houchin (R)	78%	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	?	68%
IOWA													
1	Miller-Meeks (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	63%
2	Hinson (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
3	Nunn (R)	56%	-	+	-	-	-	?	+	+	+	+	61%
4	Feenstra (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
KANSAS													
1	Mann (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	80%
2	Schmidt (R)	80%	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	75%
3	Davids (D)	20%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	10%
4	Estes (R)	67%	-	+	-	-	?	+	+	+	+	+	74%
KENTUCKY													
1	Comer (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	79%
2	Guthrie (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
3	McGarvey (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
4	Massie (R)	100%	?	?	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
5	Rogers (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
6	Barr (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
LOUISIANA													
1	Scalise (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	68%
2	Carter (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
3	Higgins (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	89%
4	Johnson (R)	80%	-	+	?	?	?	?	?	+	+	+	71%
5	Letlow (R)	70%	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	74%
6	Fields (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	5%
MAINE													
1	Pingree (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
2	Golden (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	25%
MARYLAND													
1	Harris (R)	90%	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	85%
2	Olszewski (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
3	Elfreth (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
4	Ivey (D)	11%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	5%
5	Hoyer (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
6	McClain Delaney (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
7	Mfume (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6%
8	Raskin (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
MASSACHUSETTS													
1	Neal (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
2	McGovern (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
3	Trahan (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
4	Auchincloss (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
5	Clark (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
6	Moulton (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	0%
7	Pressley (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
8	Lynch (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
9	Keating (D)	11%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	5%
MICHIGAN													
1	Bergman (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	58%
2	Moolenaar (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
3	Scholten (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
4	Huizenga (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
5	Walberg (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
6	Dingell (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
7	Barrett (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
8	McDonald Rivet (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10%
9	McClain (R)	67%	-	+	-	-	?	+	+	+	+	+	61%
10	James (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
11	Stevens (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
12	Tlaib (D)	22%	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	?	16%
13	Thanedar (D)	10%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
MINNESOTA													
1	Finstad (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	72%
2	Craig (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
3	Morrison (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%

The scores are derived by dividing the constitutionally correct votes (pluses) by the total number of pluses and minuses and multiplying by 100. (A "?" means a representative did not vote. If a representative cast fewer than five votes in this index, a score is not assigned.) Match numbers at the top of the chart to House vote descriptions on pages 24, 26, and 28.

resulting in homosexuals serving openly in the ranks, women in combat, and transgendered troops. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution grants Congress the power to restore the order, discipline, and very purpose of the military.

17 Free Speech. During consideration of the fiscal 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 3838), Representative Rich McCormick (R-Ga.) offered an amendment to prohibit the Defense Department (aka War Department) from, in its military recruitment advertising, entering into contracts with entities that "rate or rank news or information sources for the factual accuracy of their content."

The House adopted McCormick's amendment on September 10, 2025 by a vote of 219 to 211 (Roll Call 258). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because freedom of speech is a right enshrined in the First Amendment to the Constitution, and the government trespasses on this right when it contracts with entities that (as Congress.gov puts it in its description of the amendment) "perform fact-checking and information-grading services for purposes of censoring their political opponents." McCormick noted on the House floor that his amendment is necessary because "the DOD, or now the Department of War, has contracted with organizations such as NewsGuard and the Global Disinformation Index," whose ratings display a decidedly left-wing bias. He also said, "We should not be excluding large swaths of Americans [from military recruiting efforts] simply because they watch or read conservative news."

18 Presidential Appointment Powers. H.R. 5125, the "District of Columbia Judicial Nominations Reform Act of 2025," would abolish the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission, allow the U.S. president to nominate D.C. judges without its involvement, and transfer authority to appoint chief judges from the commission to the president. Currently, the president can only nominate individuals recommended by the commission.

The House passed H.R. 5125 on September 17, 2025 by a vote of 218 to 211 (Roll Call 274). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission infringes upon the president's authority to "nominate" and "appoint … Officers of the United States" under Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution. Article II, Section 2 checks the president's appointment powers by requiring Senate confirmation for "Officers of the United States" and allowing Congress to "vest the Appointment of … inferior Officers" in "Courts of Law" or "Heads of Departments," but it does not permit the use of technocratic commissions to check the president's authority.

David W. Houseknecht/United States Geological Survey via AP, File

Open for development: Promoting oil and gas drilling is essential for achieving American energy independence. Congress voted to overturn Biden administration regulations that restricted drilling in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska.

19 Alaska Petroleum Reserve Rule. S. J. Res. 80 would overturn a 2022 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) rule for the 23-million-acre National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A). This disapproval restores a less-restrictive plan that opens more areas to development, and reverses the closure of 48 percent of the NPR-A.

The House passed S. J. Res. 80 on November 18, 2025 by a vote of 216 to 209 (Roll Call 296). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because Congress' disapproval nullifies an unconstitutional regulation that imposed restrictive land management and burdened American energy production under the pretext of environmental protection. The BLM's management of lands exceeds constitutional limits under Article I, Section 8; Article IV, Section 3; and the 10th Amendment. Additionally, such environmentalist policies align with the UN's Agenda 2030, undermining national sovereignty and individual liberty. Congress should reject such policies, abolish the BLM, and transfer lands to state or private ownership.

20 China-funded Schools. H.R. 1069, the "PROTECT Our Kids Act," would prohibit federal education funds from being awarded to any elementary or secondary school that directly or indirectly receives support from the government of the People's Republic of China. This includes partnerships with Confucius Institutes or Classrooms and other arrangements involving Chinese government-backed funding, materials, or personnel.

The House passed H.R. 1069 on December 4, 2025 by a vote of 247 to 164 (Roll Call 313). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution does not permit Congress to fund or legislate on education. Furthermore, federal funds should not subsidize foreign governments' propaganda, especially adversarial communist regimes with a documented record of censorship and influence operations. Allowing China to finance curricula, personnel, or materials in American schools threatens national sovereignty, undermines parental authority, and exposes students to ideological indoctrination incompatible with American principles. ■

	Votes:	11-20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	1-20
4	McCollum (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
5	Omar (D)	20%	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	11%
6	Emmer (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
7	Fischbach (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	79%
8	Stauber (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	75%
MISSISSIPPI													
1	Kelly (R)	67%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	?	+	63%
2	Thompson (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
3	Guest (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	80%
4	Ezell (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	79%
MISSOURI													
1	Bell (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
2	Wagner (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	63%
3	Onder (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	80%
4	Alford (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
5	Cleaver (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
6	Graves (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	68%
7	Burlison (R)	100%	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
8	Smith (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70%
MONTANA													
1	Zinke (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	65%
2	Downing (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	80%
NEBRASKA													
1	Flood (R)	67%	-	+	?	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	63%
2	Bacon (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
3	Smith (R)	56%	-	+	-	-	-	+	?	+	+	+	61%
NEVADA													
1	Titus (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	-	-	0%
2	Amodei (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	55%
3	Lee (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
4	Horsford (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
NEW HAMPSHIRE													
1	Pappas (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
2	Goodlander (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
NEW JERSEY													
1	Norcross (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6%
2	Van Drew (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
3	Conaway (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
4	Smith (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
5	Gottheimer (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	6%
6	Pallone (D)	11%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	5%
7	Kean (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
8	Menendez (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
9	Pou (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
10	McIver (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
11	Sherrill (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	?	?	?	-	?	Z	0%
12	Watson Coleman (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
NEW MEXICO													
1	Stansbury (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
2	Vasquez (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	11%
3	Leger Fernandez (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
NEW YORK													
1	LaLota (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
2	Garbarino (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	63%
3	Suozzi (D)	13%	-	-	?	?	-	-	-	-	-	+	11%
4	Gillen (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	10%
5	Meeks (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
6	Meng (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
7	Velázquez (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
8	Jeffries (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
9	Clarke (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
10	Goldman (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	0%
11	Malliotakis (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	58%
12	Nadler (D)	11%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	5%
13	Espaillat (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	0%
14	Ocasio-Cortez (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
15	Torres (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
16	Latimer (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
17	Lawler (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
18	Ryan (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
19	Riley (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
20	Tonko (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
21	Stefanik (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	56%
22	Mannion (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
23	Langworthy (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
24	Tenney (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
25	Morelle (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
26	Kennedy (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
NORTH CAROLINA													
1	Davis (D)	20%	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	16%
2	Ross (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
3	Murphy (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
4	Foushee (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
5	Foxx (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	75%
6	McDowell (R)	70%	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	65%
7	Rouzer (R)	80%	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	70%
8	Harris (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	90%
9	Hudson (R)	70%	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	65%
10	Harrigan (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	90%
11	Edwards (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	65%
12	Adams (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
13	Knott (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	85%
14	Moore (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
NORTH DAKOTA													
AL	Fedorchak (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	70%
OHIO													
1	Landsman (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	10%
2	Taylor (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70%
3	Beatty (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6%
4	Jordan (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	80%
5	Latta (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
6	Rulli (R)	67%	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	?	+	63%
7	Miller (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
8	Davidson (R)	100%	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	90%
9	Kaptur (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10%
10	Turner (R)	50%	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	53%
11	Brown (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
12	Balderson (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70%
13	Sykes (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
14	Joyce (R)	56%	-	+	-	?	-	-	+	+	+	+	58%
15	Carey (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
OKLAHOMA													
1	Hern (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	75%
2	Brecheen (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	95%
3	Lucas (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
4	Cole (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
5	Bice (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	63%
OREGON													
1	Bonamici (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
2	Bentz (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
3	Dexter (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
4	Hoyle (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
5	Bynum (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
6	Salinas (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%

The scores are derived by dividing the constitutionally correct votes (pluses) by the total number of pluses and minuses and multiplying by 100. (A "?" means a representative did not vote. If a representative cast fewer than five votes in this index, a score is not assigned.) Match numbers at the top of the chart to House vote descriptions on pages 24, 26, and 28.

	Votes:	11-20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	1-20
PENNSYLVANIA													
1	Fitzpatrick (R)	50%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	45%
2	Boyle (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
3	Evans (D)	13%	+	-	-	-	-	?	?	-	-	-	6%
4	Dean (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
5	Scanlon (D)	11%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	5%
6	Houlahan (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
7	Mackenzie (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
8	Bresnahan (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
9	Meuser (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	63%
10	Perry (R)	100%	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	95%
11	Smucker (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
12	Lee (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
13	Joyce (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	80%
14	Reschenthaler (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
15	Thompson (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
16	Kelly (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	63%
17	Deluzio (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
RHODE ISLAND													
1	Amo (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
2	Magaziner (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
SOUTH CAROLINA													
1	Mace (R)	89%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	74%
2	Wilson (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	68%
3	Biggs (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	95%
4	Timmons (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	80%
5	Norman (R)	89%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	95%
6	Clyburn (D)	11%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	5%
7	Fry (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	95%
SOUTH DAKOTA													
AL	Johnson (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
TENNESSEE													
1	Harshbarger (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	89%
2	Burchett (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	90%
3	Fleischmann (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
4	DesJarlais (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	68%
5	Ogles (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	89%
6	Rose (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	67%
7	Van Epps (R)											+	
8	Kustoff (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
9	Cohen (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
TEXAS													
1	Moran (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
2	Crenshaw (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
3	Self (R)	80%	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	90%
4	Fallon (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	75%
5	Gooden (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	75%
6	Ellzey (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
7	Fletcher (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10%
8	Luttrell (R)	70%	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	75%
9	Green (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
10	McCaul (R)	56%	-	+	-	-	-	?	+	+	+	+	65%
11	Pfluger (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
12	Goldman (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	80%
13	Jackson (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	80%
14	Weber (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70%
15	De La Cruz (R)	78%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	?	+	72%
16	Escobar (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
17	Sessions (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
18	Turner (D)												20%
19	Arrington (R)	89%	-	+	?	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	79%
20	Castro (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
21	Roy (R)	100%	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
22	Nehls (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	88%
23	Gonzales (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
24	Van Duyne (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	70%
25	Williams (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	63%
26	Gill (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	90%
27	Cloud (R)	100%	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	95%
28	Cuellar (D)	30%	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	40%
29	Garcia (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
30	Crockett (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	0%
31	Carter (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
32	Johnson (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
33	Veasey (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
34	Gonzalez (D)	30%	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	39%
35	Casar (D)	13%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	6%
36	Babin (R)	56%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	?	63%
37	Doggett (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
38	Hunt (R)	89%	-	+	+	+	?	+	+	+	+	+	82%
UTAH													
1	Moore (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
2	Maloy (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	65%
3	Kennedy (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	85%
4	Owens (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	70%
VERMONT													
AL	Balint (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
VIRGINIA													
1	Wittman (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	65%
2	Kiggans (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	63%
3	Scott (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
4	McClellan (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
5	McGuire (R)	80%	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	85%
6	Cline (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	90%
7	Vindman (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
8	Beyer (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
9	Griffith (R)	70%	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	70%
10	Subramanyam (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
11	Walkinshaw (D)	0%						-	-	-	-	-	0%
WASHINGTON													
1	DelBene (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
2	Larsen (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
3	Perez (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	20%
4	Newhouse (R)	56%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	?	58%
5	Baumgartner (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	60%
6	Randall (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6%
7	Jayapal (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6%
8	Schrier (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	5%
9	Smith (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
10	Strickland (D)	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
WEST VIRGINIA													
1	Miller (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	68%
2	Moore (R)	80%	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	85%
WISCONSIN													
1	Steil (R)	60%	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	65%
2	Pocan (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
3	Van Orden (R)	70%	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	65%
4	Moore (D)	10%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5%
5	Fitzgerald (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	79%
6	Grothman (R)	80%	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	68%
7	Tiffany (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	95%
8	Wied (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	75%
WYOMING													
AL	Hageman (R)	90%	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	90%

The scores are derived by dividing the constitutionally correct votes (pluses) by the total number of pluses and minuses and multiplying by 100. (A "?" means a representative did not vote. If a representative cast fewer than five votes in this index, a score is not assigned.) Match numbers at the top of the chart to House vote descriptions on pages 24, 26, and 28.

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"This is a republic, not a democracy — Let's keep it that way!"

Senate Vote Descriptions

11 Appliance Efficiency Regulations. H. J. Res. 42 would overturn a Department of Energy rule imposing new efficiency-standard certification, labeling, and enforcement requirements for dozens of appliances, preventing the regulation from taking effect.

The Senate passed H. J. Res. 42 on April 30, 2025 by a vote of 52 to 46 (Roll Call 223). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because Congress — and unelected federal agencies — lacks constitutional authorization to dictate appliance standards, which drive up costs, reduce consumer choice, and micromanage private industry. Energy policy and consumer decisions are not among the enumerated powers of the federal government, and Congress should rein in bureaucratic rulemaking — driven by the false climate-change narrative promoted by Marxists and globalists — that substitutes centralized mandates for market freedom and individual judgment.

Thinapob/Adobe Stock

Rigged economy: Government subsidies for wind and solar projects undermine the free market and create government favoritism for "green" energy. Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah) proposed an amendment to end those subsidies, but the Senate voted it down.

12 GENIUS Act. S. 1582, the "Guiding and Establishing National Innovation for U.S. Stablecoins (GENIUS) Act," would regulate cryptocurrency stablecoins, digital assets used as a means of payment redeemable for a fixed amount of currency. It requires stablecoin issuers to apply to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) to be a "permitted payment stablecoin issuer" and maintain 1:1 reserves in approved assets. Additionally, it empowers the Federal Reserve Board, FDIC, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, and Department of the Treasury to oversee permitted stablecoin issuers.

The Senate passed S. 1582 on June 17, 2025 by a vote of 68 to 30 (Roll Call 318). We have assigned pluses to the nays because the GENIUS Act expands government surveillance and control over private financial activities, creating a backdoor to a central bank digital currency. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution does not permit Congress to regulate the financial sector, and the Fourth Amendment protects individuals from unreasonable searches and unwarranted government surveillance.

13 Ending "Green" Subsidies. During consideration of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1), Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah) offered an amendment to end federal tax credits for projects utilizing battery and energy-storage technologies that begin construction more than 60 days after the bill's enactment, phasing out taxpayer-funded subsidies and curbing federal favoritism toward "green" energy. By contrast, the enacted law preserves longer-term subsidies for energy storage while ending tax credits for wind and solar projects placed in service after December 31, 2027.

The Senate rejected Lee's amendment on July 1, 2025 by a vote of 21 to 79 (Roll Call 360). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because the amendment would have ended these subsidies almost immediately rather than allowing them to continue for years. By preserving "green" energy credits, Congress continues to advance policies aligned with the UN's Agenda 2030, using federal tax law to manipulate the economy and impose globalist energy priorities that fall well outside the Constitution's enumerated powers.

14 Fiscal 2025 Rescissions. H.R. 4, the "Rescissions Act of 2025," would rescind $9 billion in funding previously appropriated by Congress for fiscal 2025, including $7.9 billion in

Senate Vote Scores ✓

Votes:	11-20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	1-20
ALABAMA												
Tuberville (R)	70%	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	80%
Britt (R)	60%	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	75%
ALASKA												
Murkowski (R)	33%	+	-	-	-	-	-	?	+	+	-	47%
Sullivan (R)	30%	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	45%
ARIZONA												
Kelly (D)	11%	-	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	5%
Gallego (D)	13%	-	-	-	-	?	-	-	?	+	-	6%
ARKANSAS												
Boozman (R)	40%	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	55%
Cotton (R)	44%	+	?	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	63%
CALIFORNIA												
Padilla (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	5%
Schiff (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	5%
COLORADO												
Bennet (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
Hickenlooper (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	5%
CONNECTICUT												
Blumenthal (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
Murphy (D)	30%	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	15%
DELAWARE												
Coons (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
Blunt Rochester (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
FLORIDA												
Scott (R)	80%	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	85%
Moody (R)	60%	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	75%
GEORGIA												
Ossoff (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
Warnock (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
HAWAII												
Schatz (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
Hirono (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
IDAHO												
Crapo (R)	60%	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	65%
Risch (R)	60%	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	74%
ILLINOIS												
Durbin (D)	30%	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	15%
Duckworth (D)	22%	-	+	-	-	?	-	-	-	+	-	11%
INDIANA												
Young (R)	40%	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	60%
Banks (R)	70%	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	75%
IOWA												
Grassley (R)	50%	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	60%
Ernst (R)	50%	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	70%
KANSAS												
Moran (R)	50%	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	60%
Marshall (R)	60%	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	70%
KENTUCKY												
McConnell (R)	38%	?	-	-	+	?	-	-	+	-	+	56%
Paul (R)	100%	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
LOUISIANA												
Cassidy (R)	50%	+	-	-	+	?	?	-	+	-	+	67%
Kennedy (R)	70%	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	80%

Votes:	11-20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	1-20
MAINE												
Collins (R)	20%	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	40%
King (I)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
MARYLAND												
Van Hollen (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	15%
Alsobrooks (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	5%
MASSACHUSETTS												
Warren (D)	30%	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	15%
Markey (D)	30%	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	15%
MICHIGAN												
Peters (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
Slotkin (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	5%
MINNESOTA												
Klobuchar (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
Smith (D)	22%	-	+	-	?	-	-	-	-	+	-	11%
MISSISSIPPI												
Wicker (R)	33%	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	?	-	+	53%
Hyde-Smith (R)	50%	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	60%
MISSOURI												
Hawley (R)	60%	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	65%
Schmitt (R)	67%	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	?	-	+	79%
MONTANA												
Daines (R)	44%	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	?	68%
Sheehy (R)	50%	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	70%
NEBRASKA												
Fischer (R)	50%	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	60%
Ricketts (R)	50%	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	60%
NEVADA												
Cortez Masto (D)	11%	-	-	-	-	-	-	?	-	+	-	5%
Rosen (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	5%
NEW HAMPSHIRE												
Shaheen (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
Hassan (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	5%
NEW JERSEY												
Booker (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	5%
Kim (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	5%
NEW MEXICO												
Heinrich (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	5%
Luján (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	5%
NEW YORK												
Schumer (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
Gillibrand (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	5%
NORTH CAROLINA												
Tillis (R)	50%	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	60%
Budd (R)	70%	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	75%
NORTH DAKOTA												
Hoeven (R)	50%	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	60%
Cramer (R)	40%	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	53%
OHIO												
Moreno (R)	60%	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	75%
Husted (R)	50%	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	70%
OKLAHOMA												
Lankford (R)	60%	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	65%
Mullin (R)	40%	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	53%

Votes:	11-20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	1-20
OREGON												
Wyden (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
Merkley (D)	30%	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	15%
PENNSYLVANIA												
Fetterman (D)	20%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	10%
McCormick (R)	50%	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	65%
RHODE ISLAND												
Reed (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
Whitehouse (D)	22%	?	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	11%
SOUTH CAROLINA												
Graham (R)	40%	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	55%
Scott (R)	50%	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	60%
SOUTH DAKOTA												
Thune (R)	50%	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	60%
Rounds (R)	40%	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	55%
TENNESSEE												
Blackburn (R)	60%	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	70%
Hagerty (R)	70%	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	79%
TEXAS												
Cornyn (R)	60%	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	70%
Cruz (R)	78%	+	-	+	+	+	+	?	+	-	+	84%

Votes:	11-20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	1-20
UTAH												
Lee (R)	67%	+	-	+	+	-	?	+	+	-	+	84%
Curtis (R)	60%	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	80%
VERMONT												
Sanders (I)	30%	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	21%
Welch (D)	33%	-	+	-	-	?	-	+	-	+	-	17%
VIRGINIA												
Warner (D)	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	5%
Kaine (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
WASHINGTON												
Murray (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	11%
Cantwell (D)	30%	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	15%
WEST VIRGINIA												
Capito (R)	40%	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	53%
Justice (R)	40%	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	65%
WISCONSIN												
Johnson (R)	70%	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	80%
Baldwin (D)	20%	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	10%
WYOMING												
Barrasso (R)	70%	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	75%
Lummis (R)	80%	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	84%

The scores are derived by dividing the constitutionally correct votes (pluses) by the total number of pluses and minuses and multiplying by 100. (A "?" means a senator did not vote. If a senator cast fewer than five votes in this index, a score is not assigned.) Match numbers at the top of the chart to Senate vote descriptions on pages 33, 35, and 36.

foreign aid and $1.1 billion for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The foreign-aid rescissions include $800 million for migration and refugee assistance, $361 million for international peacekeeping operations, and $169 million for international organizations such as the United Nations and World Health Organization.

The Senate passed H.R. 4 on July 17, 2025 by a vote of 51 to 48 (Roll Call 411). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution does not authorize Congress to establish or fund public media, or to send financial aid to foreign countries. Although $9 billion is a small number compared to the total amount of federal expenditures, it is a good first step toward reining in unconstitutional, reckless spending.

15 Reducing Agriculture Funding. During consideration of the fiscal 2026 military-construction and agriculture appropriations bill (H.R. 3944), Senator John Kennedy (R-La.) offered an amendment to reduce discretionary spending in the agriculture appropriations component of the bill by two percent across the board. This would not affect SNAP and EBT food stamps, which are funded as mandatory spending.

The Senate rejected Kennedy's amendment on August 1, 2025 by a vote of 14 to 81 (Roll Call 476). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because the federal government needs to start reining in climbing federal spending (and deficits) somewhere in order to avert fiscal disaster.

16 Budget Resolution. Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) made a motion to proceed to Senate Concurrent Resolution 22, a budget resolution he introduced. On the Senate floor, Paul pleaded, "This year, the United States will spend $6.7 trillion while bringing in about $4.7 trillion. That is $2 trillion more being spent than what is coming in…. Next year, it is going to be even worse. The budget that was passed in the spring said we would spend $6.3 trillion next year, but it turns out it is going to be $7.2 trillion next year." Of his resolution, Paul said, "My budget, … the Six Penny Plan budget, cuts 6 percent of all spending to rebalance in just 5 years."

The Senate rejected Paul's motion on September 16, 2025 by a vote of 36 to 62 (Roll Call 521). We have assigned pluses to the yeas not only because most government spending falls outside the scope of constitutionally authorized federal powers, but also because the federal government needs to start reining in ballooning federal spending and debt in order to avert future fiscal disaster. Although six percent may not seem like much, modest cuts are still better than none at all.

17 Federal Reserve Interest Payments. During consideration of the fiscal 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 2296), Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) offered an amendment to prohibit any Federal Reserve bank from paying interest on reserve balances that are maintained at a Federal Reserve bank by or on behalf of a big bank or another depository institution. Of the need for his amendment, Paul explained, "The Federal Reserve pays both foreign and domestic banks to simply park their money in Fed accounts — in other words, to not loan money at all. Over the past 5 years, the Fed's big bank bailout amounts to over half a trillion dollars…. My amendment ends these subsidies."

The Senate rejected Paul's amendment on October 9, 2025 by a vote of 14 to 83

(Roll Call 562). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because the unconstitutional Federal Reserve should not bail out or subsidize banks at the expense of taxpayers.

18 Alaska Petroleum Reserve Rule. S. J. Res. 80 would overturn a 2022 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) rule for the 23-million-acre National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A). This disapproval restores a less-restrictive plan that opens more areas to development, and reverses the closure of 48 percent of the NPR-A.

The Senate passed S. J. Res. 80 on October 30, 2025 by a vote of 52 to 45 (Roll Call 599). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because Congress' disapproval nullifies an unconstitutional regulation that imposed restrictive land management and burdened American energy production under the pretext of environmental protection. The BLM's management of lands exceeds constitutional limits under Article I, Section 8; Article IV, Section 3; and the 10th Amendment. Additionally, such environmentalist policies align with the UN's Agenda 2030, undermining national sovereignty and individual liberty. Congress should reject such policies, abolish the BLM, and transfer lands to state or private ownership.

19 Venezuela. S. J. Res. 90 would "direct the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities within or against Venezuela that have not been authorized by Congress."

On November 6, 2025, Senator Tim Kaine (D-Va.), who introduced S. J. Res. 90 along with Senators Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) and Rand Paul (R-Ky.), attempted to get his resolution out of committee and to the Senate floor by making a motion to discharge it. His motion was rejected by a vote of 49 to 51 (Roll Call 608). We have assigned pluses to the yeas because the Constitution delegates to Congress, not the president, the power to declare war, and because of the folly of foreign military interventionism. In his remarks on the Senate floor, Paul warned against "pursuing regime change in Venezuela," while also pointing out that "the President simply does not have the authority to unilaterally launch wars."

20 ObamaCare Subsidy Extension. S. 3385 would extend enhanced ObamaCare subsidies, originally enacted under the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act and the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, by an additional three years.

The Senate did not vote directly on S. 3385, but on a motion to invoke cloture (and thus limit debate) so the bill could be voted on. The motion to invoke cloture was rejected on December 11, 2025 by a vote of 51 to 48 (Roll Call 644; a three-fifths majority of the entire Senate is required to invoke cloture). We have assigned pluses to the nays because Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution does not authorize Congress to subsidize health insurance. ObamaCare reduced individual choice in the health-insurance market, increased costs for many Americans, and has been poorly run from the beginning, exactly what is to be expected when the federal government attempts to regulate and subsidize healthcare. ■

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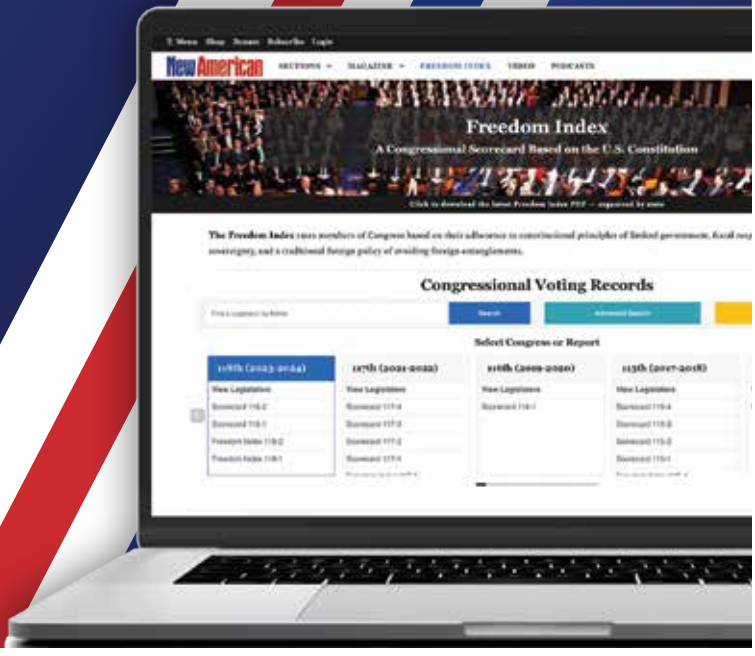

A Step in the Right Direction, but the Fight Continues

by John T. Larabell

As of January 1, the federal tax on items regulated by the National Firearms Act (NFA) has been reduced to $0 — down from the original $200, where it had been since the NFA was passed in 1934. This means firearms enthusiasts no longer have to pay a $200 tax when purchasing suppressors, short-barreled rifles (SBRs), short-barreled shotguns (SBSs), etc.

This reduction of the tax from $200 to $0, part of Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill Act, is certainly something to celebrate. In 1934, the $200 tax was prohibitively expensive for most Americans, equivalent to more than $4,800 today. This was done, of course, to make ownership of such items as suppressors, SBRs (with a barrel length of less than 16 inches), and SBSs (with a barrel length of less than 18 inches) practically impossible for all but the well-to-do. The tax was also used as justification for the onerous registration requirements for NFA items, such as fingerprinting, a photograph, and lengthy forms. The registration was tied to the tax, enabling it to be collected, and since Congress has the power to tax, the whole scheme was constitutional (or so went the argument). Add to this the ridiculous wait times for approval of NFA items — often one year or more — and it's no wonder that few Americans owned them until recent years. Indeed, between the NFA's passage and 2005 — the year after the Clinton-era "assault-weapons ban" expired — there were only around 150,000 NFA items owned by Americans.

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As of 2023, there were more than 7.5 million NFA items in the hands of American gun owners. Americans owned nearly five million suppressors by the end of 2024. That number is doubtless much higher now, particularly with the much-shortened approval times (sometimes only a few days) over the last couple of years owing to the new e-file system at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). During most of 2025, the ATF was approving between 40,000 and 60,000 NFA items *every month*. Now, with the introduction of the $0 tax, it is realistic to imagine Americans owning more than 10 million NFA items in the next couple of years.

Of course, things are not all rainbows and unicorns. Americans still have to go through the lengthy registration process for NFA items. This is inconvenient, intrusive, and unconstitutional. Indeed, the National Firearms Act itself is a violation of the Second Amendment. For that matter, the entire ATF is an unconstitutional federal agency.

And we can't forget the fact that politicians are always trying to enact more gun-control laws. Case in point: Last July, after the passage of the Big Beautiful Bill, Senator Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) introduced an amendment to a defense spending bill adjusting the NFA tax for inflation, raising it to $4,709 (at the time). While few thought this amendment would stand a chance of passing, it does reveal what Democrats might try to do if and when they regain Congress and the White House.

Efforts are being made to stop the ATF's unconstitutional overreach. The Hearing Protection Act, seeking to remove suppressors from the NFA, was first introduced in 2015. It has been reintroduced several times, and part of its language made it into the Big Beautiful Bill with the elimination of the NFA tax. With the elimination of the tax, gun-rights advocacy groups such as Gun Owners of America (GOA) and others have filed the One Big Beautiful Lawsuit, which seeks to overturn the National Firearms Act under the grounds that it is no longer a tax but simply a piece of unconstitutional gun control. Other groups have filed similar lawsuits, and the legal battle is underway.

The fight is far from over. Americans need to keep supporting 2A organizations such as GOA, and continue to pressure their congressmen to respect the Second Amendment. And keep some powder dry. ■

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The Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa

Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa

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AT A GLANCE

- The battle of Las Navas de Tolosa marked the beginning of the end for the Moorish occupation of Spain.
- It marked a reconciliation among the kings of Castile, Aragon, and Navarre, which would eventually lead to the creation of Spain.
- The leader of the coalition, Alfonso VIII of Castile, had been defeated by the Moors as a young man.
- As a result of Las Navas de Tolosa, a large part of southern Spain was permanently liberated from Moorish rule.

by Steve Bonta

On July 18, 1195, a battle was underway at Alarcos Castle, not far from Toledo in what is now southern Spain. On one side was an immense and well-disciplined host led by the Almohad Caliph Yaqub al-Mansur, while on the other, a less-unified force led by 39-year-old Alfonso VIII, king of Castile, was fighting to survive. Al-Mansur's army, fighting on behalf of the Islamic caliphate of Almohad, which controlled most of southern Spain and Portugal as well as most of the African Maghreb, included a contingent of Christian knights dispatched by a Castilian nobleman who was Alfonso's sworn enemy. Then, as afterward, the lack of Spanish unity was a major weakness.

Following an ineffectual cavalry charge and hours of fighting in the searing heat, Alfonso's forces found themselves hard pressed, with the king himself engaged in desperate hand-to-hand combat with dozens of adversaries. When it became clear that the battle was lost, several of Alfonso's attendants had to drag him from the battlefield and convey him to safety, even as the lines collapsed in what became a total rout of the Christian army. Aside from Alfonso himself, few Castilians escaped, and the military force of the kingdom was virtually obliterated. Alfonso, by all accounts a gifted leader afterwards known as "El Noble," never forgot that terrible day nor its punitive aftermath. Al-Mansur followed up his victory at Alarcos by recapturing many Christian-held towns and cities, from Extremadura near the Portuguese frontier to windswept La Mancha hundreds of miles to the east, conducting indiscriminate raids and pillage throughout. Adding insult to injury, the Almohad caliph managed to secure an alliance with another Alfonso, Alfonso IX of Leon, who was angry at the Castilian king for marching to Alarcos without him. Yet another rival Spanish kingdom, Navarre, proclaimed its neutrality.

Thus chastened by events, Alfonso VIII after Alarcos stayed in his dominion, watching and waiting for another chance. Like every other Christian on the Iberian Peninsula, he was painfully aware of the march of centuries that had consumed the region in a seemingly endless war against the Muslim invaders, known to history as the Moors. He prayed for a time when the Moors would finally be ousted. More than a century before his time, the great warrior El Cid Campeador had won a series of stunning victories against the Moorish occupiers, liberating many Spanish towns and cities. But now, it appeared, the heavens had withdrawn their favor, and the "Saracens" (as chroniclers of the time styled the Moors) were once again ascendant. Alfonso knew that the Spanish needed to unify if they were to stand any chance of driving the Muslims out; it was, after all, the fractured, tribalized condition of Iberia after the collapse of the Roman Empire that had allowed the Moors to invade and conquer in the first place.

But conditions in the 1190s were not yet ripe for a counterattack. All Alfonso could do was wait. When the opportunity to strike back finally came, 17 years later, he was no longer a young man. But the great battle in which he played a decisive role proved to be the death knell of Moorish power in southwestern Europe, and the beginning of the end of the longest war in history, the Reconquista.

Steve Bonta is publisher of The New American.

While Alfonso VIII died only two years after the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, his descendants continued the work of the Reconquista, whose outcome had now become inevitable, even if the end was still more than two centuries in the future.

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Alfonso VIII of Castile

A New Crusade

The world of 1212 was, in many respects, little changed from the 1190s. The Christian part of Iberia was still divided into rival kingdoms — Portugal, Castile, Navarre, and Leon — while the Almohad Caliphate still controlled most of North Africa and the southern Iberian Peninsula, especially Andalucia and Extremadura. But, whereas Alfonso VIII remained king of Castile — and, as the son-in-law of the formidable Eleanor of Aquitaine, was the preeminent monarch in Spain and one of the most important in Europe — the Moors had a new caliph in the person of Muhammad al-Nasir. In 1211, al-Nasir had begun an ambitious campaign of military expansion in Spain, aiming to undo several centuries of Christian advances. His forces went deep into La Mancha, beyond Almohad territory, and captured Salvatierra Castle, where the famous order of the Knights of Calatrava had its headquarters.

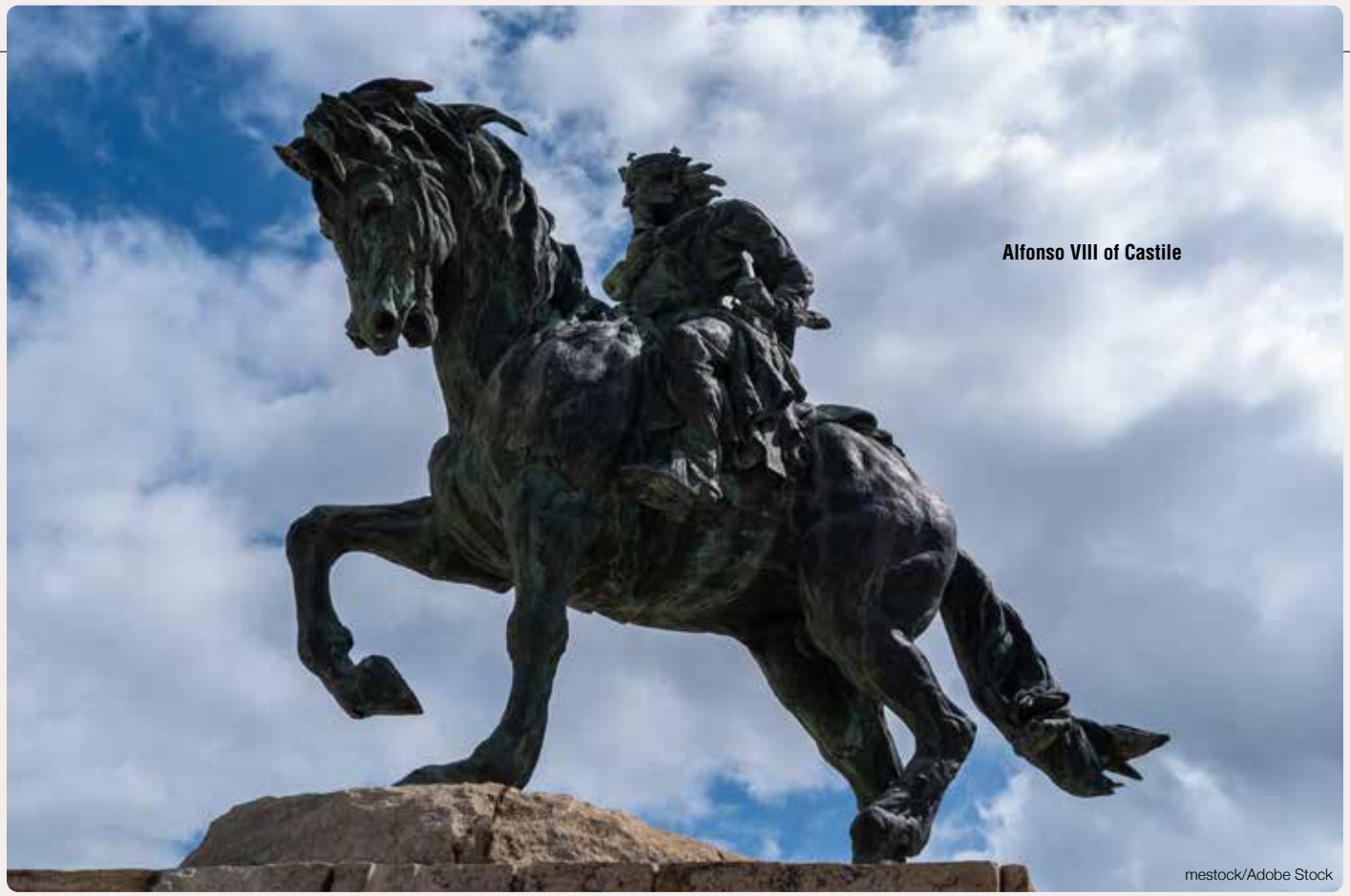
So alarming was this event that the pope himself, Innocent III, called for a crusade to defend Christian Spain. The time for another test of strength against the Moors had arrived. Christians on both sides of the Pyrenees responded to the pope's call, sending around 2,000 French knights along with their squires, as well as the bishop of Nantes and the archbishops of both Bordeaux and Narbonne. On the Spanish side, the rival sovereigns of Navarre (Sancho VII) and Aragon (Peter II) set aside their rivalries with Castile and King Alfonso and led large contingents south to a fort at Malagon. The French reached the fort first, and easily overwhelmed the Moors defending it. When the Spanish arrived the following day, the French, dismayed by the dryness and heat of southern Spain, wanted to abandon the enterprise, but were eventually persuaded by the Spanish to continue to nearby Calatrava la Vieja.

When the combined forces reached the town, a former stronghold of the Calatrava knights, they found it heavily defended. Realizing that they would have to destroy the walls in order to storm it, they heeded the counsel of local friars and offered the Moorish defenders safe passage, as long as they left unarmed. The Moors, grateful to escape with their lives, abandoned the castle, and the resulting spoils were divided between the French and Peter II of Aragon.

Following the capture of Calatrava, most of the French refused to go further. As Alfonso recorded in his letter to Pope Innocent recounting events:

> The French — still keen on the idea of going home, even though the Lord God was showing us grace and favour, and even though we were willing to go on providing them all with necessities in a generous way … all together abandoned the Cross, together with the Archbishop of Bordeaux and the Bishop of Nantes, even though there was certainly going to be a battle with the Saracens; and they went off, except a very few who stayed on with the Archbishop of Narbonne and Tibaldo de Blazon, who was one of our liegemen, and also his men and certain other knights of Poitou. Those who remained, knights and serving-men, amounted to scarcely 150; and of their foot-soldiers, none at all remained.

Altogether, the remaining force, much reduced from its original strength, probably did not number much more than 10,000 — less than one-quarter the size of the Moorish host that awaited them on the high plains beyond the Sierra Morena, at a spot known as Las Navas de Tolosa. With additional reinforcements still an-



Alfonso VIII of Castile

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ticipated (including the king of Navarre), Alfonso decided to attempt to retake additional Moorish strongholds in the area. The first was the castle of Alarcos, the very place where Alfonso had barely escaped with his life in the battle 17 years earlier. This time around, although the castle was well defended, Alfonso and his army routed the enemy and retook the structure before moving on to capture three other castles in the area.

Eventually, the kings of Navarre and Aragon met up with Alfonso, although their combined forces only contributed a few hundred additional knights to the Christian army. Finding the main pass that led to the high plain where the Moorish army was encamped blocked by enemy forces, Alfonso decided to try to find another way over the towering mountains. A local shepherd named Martin Alhaja, "whom God by his command sent to us," in Alfonso's words, offered to lead the Christian army through another pass, the narrow gorge of Despeñaperros, which the Moors did not know about. The pass was steep, dry, and almost waterless, but the Christian army successfully reached the high ground before the Moors realized where they were.

Making camp Saturday evening, the Christians declined attempts by al-Nasir to draw them into combat both Saturday and Sunday, using the time instead to rest, pray, take communion, and in all respects prepare their souls for a Christian death, if it were required of them. By all accounts, the courage of Alfonso and his forces was exemplary as they prepared for battle against a much larger army. According to Alfonso's account:

> Sunday, the Saracens came up with their huge army arrayed in battle lines. We, wishing to study the numbers of their men and their disposition and attitude, and to find out how they behaved in all circumstances, took advice from our expert and seasoned men, and resolved to wait until the following day, Monday. In these circumstances, we posted cavalrymen and foot-soldiers so that the enemy should not in any way be able to attack the ends of our line, and this, thanks to God's grace did not happen.

Alfonso himself knew from personal experience the bitterness and terror of defeat, and it is impossible to know what he, now a man of 56 years of age, was thinking on the eve of combat.

The Decisive Battle

On Monday, July 16, the battle finally commenced. The outnumbered Christians charged impetuously at the enemy and engaged them at close quarters, where the Spanish knights had the advantage in swordsmanship and other aspects of hand-to-hand combat. Under such conditions, the Moorish archers were unable to inflict much damage. While the battle initially went well for the Christians, the heat, dryness, and sheer numbers of the enemy eventually began taking their toll, and the Christian line began to collapse. At this point, it fell upon Alfonso to turn the tide of battle and finally heal the old scar of Alarcos. While the Castilian king was too modest to describe his own decisive role in the battle in his missive to Innocent III, the other major Spanish source on the battle, *The Latin Chronicle of the Kings of Castile*, does:

> At one point, certain wretched Christians who were retreating and fleeing cried out that the Christians were overcome. When the glorious

> and noble king of Castile, who was prepared rather to die than to be conquered, heard that cry of doom, he ordered the man who carried his standard before him, to spur his horse and hasten quickly up the hill where the force of the battle was; he did so at once. When the Christians came up, the Moors thought that new waves had come upon them and fell back, overcome by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Encouraged by Alfonso's heroism, the Navarran contingent, following the lead of their king, Sancho VIII, charged at the caliph's tent in the heart of the enemy's forces. The tent was encircled by well-armed slaves — chained together, according to some versions of the event — who fought savagely but ultimately gave way. Seeing the rout, Muhammad al-Nasir fled the field, as Alfonso himself had once been forced to do, and made his escape, with a few of his retainers, back across the Strait of Gibraltar to Marrakesh, where he immured himself in his castle in deep depression and died a year later.

With al-Nasir's tent overrun, the Moorish forces collapsed, and the victorious Christians took few prisoners. According to the best estimates, the Moors suffered as many as 100,000 casualties, while the Christian side seems to have lost only a few dozen, such was the disparity in skill in hand-to-hand fighting. According to Alfonso's account of the battle and its immediate aftermath:

> On their side there fell in the battle 100,000 armed men, perhaps more, according to the estimates of Saracens we captured later. Of the army of the Lord — a fact not to be mentioned without the most fervent thanksgiving, and one scarcely to be believed, unless it be thought a miracle — only some twenty or thirty Christians in our whole host fell. What cause for joy and thanksgiving! Yet there is one cause for regret here: that so few in such a vast army went to Christ as martyrs.
>
> In order to show how immense were the numbers of the enemy, when our army rested after the battle for two days in the enemy camp, for all the fires which were needed to cook food and make bread and other things, no other wood was needed than that of the enemy arrows and spears which were lying about, and even then we burned scarcely half of them. Even though our army was running short of food and other supplies, because we had spent so long in bare and barren countryside, we found such an abundance of food and weapons, as also of war-horses and beasts of burden, that our men, by taking as many of them as they wished, still left more out of the huge number of animals than those they took.

The Christians pressed their advantage after the battle, conquering several nearby Moorish forts and then advancing on the major towns of Baeza and Ubeda. Baeza was retaken without a fight, since the panicked Moors had already abandoned it, but Ubeda was another well-defended stronghold. Nevertheless, the Christians took Ubeda quite quickly — and slaughtered tens of thousands more Muslim defenders before razing the city.

The Rest Is History

The result of the victory of Las Navas de Tolosa was the near-total destruction of Moorish expeditionary forces in Spain. Moorish enclaves remained, most notably the city of Granada and nearby territory, including the critical seaport of Málaga, but never again would the Moors in North Africa pose a serious threat of invasion to Christian Spain. One such attempt was made, more than a century later, by the successor caliphate to the Almohads, the Marinids, in 1340, but they were roundly defeated by a Castilian-Portuguese coalition at Rio Salado near Tarifa, at the southernmost tip of Spain.

While Alfonso VIII died only two years after the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, his descendants continued the work of the Reconquista, whose outcome had now become inevitable, even if the end was still more than two centuries in the future. His grandson Ferdinand III took a host of important Spanish cities in the mid-13th century, including Córdoba in 1236 and Seville in 1248, as well as Jaén, Cádiz, and Jerez. During that same period, the Aragonese retook the Balearic Islands and the pivotal city of Valencia.

The final blow to the Moors came with the fall of Granada at the beginning of 1492 to the first king and queen of newly unified Spain, Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon. On January 2 of that epochal year, the last emir of Granada, Muhammad XII, surrendered the city to Spanish forces after a 10-year campaign that had closed the Spanish noose until only the city of Granada itself remained in Moorish hands, bringing an end to the 780-year Reconquista. But the fall of Granada, which had long had vassal status with respect to Castile, was really a postscript to the titanic conflict of centuries, which had its outcome decreed more than two centuries earlier, on the dry, windswept plains of Las Navas de Tolosa. It was that battle that, thanks to the extraordinary courage of the Spanish, determined that Spain would one day become a great world power, a pivotal player in the colonization of the New World, and one of the greatest vessels for the worldwide spread of Christianity and Western civilization. ■

Monument to the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa

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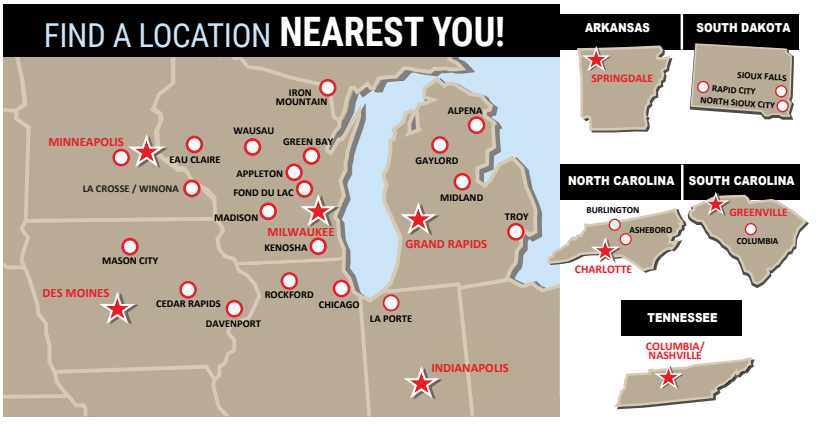

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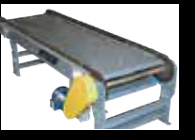

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The Real Teddy Roosevelt

Theodore Roosevelt

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AT A GLANCE

- Contrary to popular belief, Teddy Roosevelt was not a conservative but a Big Government progressive.
- Roosevelt used antitrust legislation to interfere in the free market on an epic scale.
- He pushed for the regulation of food and drugs.
- He was one of the first presidential advocates of American military interventionism.

"Theodore Roosevelt remains one of our most revered presidents — regularly named by historians among the top four, along with Washington, Lincoln, and FDR."

— Bret Baier, *To Rescue the American Spirit: Teddy Roosevelt and the Birth of a Superpower*

"Theodore Roosevelt was a petty, power-grubbing politician with a big mouth."

— Jim Powell, *Bully Boy: The Truth About Theodore Roosevelt's Legacy*

by Dr. Thomas DiLorenzo

Many conservatives would agree with Bret Baier that President Theodore ("Teddy") Roosevelt is both a conservative icon and one of the greatest American presidents. This is incongruous, to say the least. During his presidency, from 1901-1909, Roosevelt was a big-government "progressive" and not a conservative. He denounced constitutional limits on government and despised the Jeffersonian tradition of decentralized and constitutionally limited government. He opposed the system of federalism created by the Founding Fathers. He routinely ignored the Senate and the House of Representatives and got away with it, establishing a dangerously dictatorial precedent.

Like his neoconservative political descendants, Roosevelt hated the South for believing that the Union was voluntary and that, therefore, nullification and secession were rights possessed by the citizens of all states.

He opposed free-market competition and favored pervasive government regulation. He did as much as anyone to turn America's constitutional republic into a European-style imperialistic empire by orchestrating and supporting conquests of numerous countries.

Personally, Roosevelt struck many as odd and unstable. After meeting with him, Mark Twain surmised that he was "clearly insane." As historian Thomas E. Woods wrote in *Reassessing the Presidency*:

> At age twenty ... after an argument with is girlfriend, he went home and shot and killed his neighbor's dog. He told a friend in 1884 [at age 26] that when he donned his spe-

Dr. Thomas DiLorenzo is a retired economics professor and the author or co-author of 18 books, including The Real Lincoln, Hamilton's Curse, The Problem With Socialism, How Capitalism Saved America, *and* The Politically Incorrect Guide to Economics.

During his presidency, from 1901-1909, Roosevelt was a big-government "progressive" and not a conservative. He denounced constitutional limits on government and despised the Jeffersonian tradition of decentralized and constitutionally limited government. He opposed the system of federalism created by the Founding Fathers.

cial cowboy suit, which featured revolver and rifle, "I feel able to face anything." When he killed his first buffalo, he "abandoned himself to complete hysteria," as historian Edmund Morris put it, "whooping and shrieking while his guide watched in stolid amazement." His reaction was similar in 1898 when he killed his first Spaniard.

As is true of so many other presidents, Roosevelt has been judged primarily on his rhetoric and stated intentions instead of his actual behavior. He is said to have been a famous "trust buster," implying that he was an enemy of monopolies. In reality, his "trust busting" made American corporations *less* efficient and *less* competitive. Roosevelt supposedly took on the railroad corporations in a quest to battle monopoly, but in reality his actions crippled America's most important industry and *reduced* competition.

His crusade for "pure food" and drug regulation played into the hands of corporate lobbyists who "captured" new regulatory agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration and used them to thwart competition. His "conservation" policies of nationalizing hundreds of millions of acres of land led to massive corruption, political cronyism run amok, and environmental degradation.

Roosevelt hunting in Africa

public domain

In December 1906 he declared that "there is every reason why ... the National Government should impose a graduated inheritance tax, and, if possible, a graduated income tax." Seven years later he got his wish: His progressive movement finally got its federal income tax. No real conservative would have done that. No wonder Bill Clinton once said that Theodore Roosevelt was his favorite Republican president.

Roosevelt's Quixotic and Destructive "Trust Busting"

Roosevelt sounded like a socialist muckraker when he denounced the "mighty industrial overlords" and labeled free-market competition "a riot of individualistic materialism." Like his political idol Alexander Hamilton, Roosevelt believed that commerce needed to be guided not by Adam Smith's "invisible hand" of competition, but by the heavy political hand and bombastic rhetoric of the likes of Theodore Roosevelt.

There *was* a monopoly problem in America at the turn of the 20th century, but it was caused by government intervention. Government schools were monopolistic, as were all of the public utilities, which were either government-owned monopolies or private corporations that had been granted monopoly charters by state and local governments. Roosevelt promoted a government dam-building monopoly (the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation), a power-generating monopoly, and competition-hampering protectionist tariffs.

The post-Civil War era from 1865 to the turn of the century was a period of *price deflation*. The American industrial revolution that took place during that time was a time of intense competition, with a vast expansion of production, massive innova-

tion, and a subsequent *decline* of prices for more than three decades. As Jim Powell cataloged in his book *Bully Boy*, steel production rose from 1.3 million tons in 1880 to 11.2 million tons in 1900, the year Roosevelt was elected, more than an eightfold increase. Petroleum production rose from 152 trillion British thermal units in 1880 to 369 trillion in 1900. Sugar, which was said to be produced by a monopolistic industry, *expanded* in output from 1.9 billion pounds in 1880 to 7.3 billion pounds in 1900. Food and clothing production more than doubled during that time. (Mainstream economics maintains that monopolies *reduce* production in order to raise prices.)

There was also a dramatic increase in innovation during this period, with the number of patents issued by the U.S. government more than doubling. This was the era of Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, George Westinghouse, George Eastman, George Washington Carver, and Orville and Wilbur Wright, among others. The American economy was the most hyper-competitive in the world, but Roosevelt falsely insisted that the opposite was true.

The first federal antitrust law, the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, was premised on this upside-down view of economic history. Yours truly was the first economist to ever investigate the question of whether the "trusts of the 1880s were in fact restricting output and raising prices as standard economic policy of the day — and of this day — insisted." In a 1984 article published in the *International Review of Law and Economics*, based on U.S. Department of Commerce Data, I reported that in the decade prior to the Sherman Act (1880-1890), real GDP increased by 24 percent, but production in the industries accused by Congress of being monopolistic increased by more than a multiple of seven, by 175 percent.

The Consumer Price Index declined by seven percent during that decade, but the prices in the "monopolistic trusts" fell more sharply, with steel-rail prices declining by 53 percent, refined sugar falling by 23 percent, lead down by 12 percent, zinc by 20 percent, and so on.

These facts were known at the time and led *The New York Times* to smell a big political rat with passage of the 1890 Sherman Act. "That so-called Anti-Trust law was passed to deceive the people and to clear the way for this ... law relating to the tariff" so that the proponents of "tariff extortion" could say "Behold! We have attacked the Trusts," the *Times* editorialized.

Great Northern Railway locomotive

public domain

The 1890 McKinley Tariff, sponsored in the Senate by none other than Senator John Sherman, after whom the antitrust act was named, was the biggest tariff-rate increase in history up to that time. The Sherman Antitrust Act, *The New York Times* believed, was a political smokescreen designed to hide the real cause of monopoly power, the 1890 McKinley Tariff.

Ignoring all of these facts, Roosevelt's first big antitrust case was the 1904 *Northern Securities* case. It involved three railroads: James J. Hill's Great Northern, J.P. Morgan's Northern Pacific, and E.H. Harriman's Union Pacific. The former two companies ran separate lines from St. Paul to Seattle and were considered to be the lowest-priced and most efficient — and therefore most profitable — lines to the West Coast.

E.H. Harriman commenced his famous takeover attempt on the Northern Pacific, purchasing so many shares of common stock that the price ballooned from $144 to $1,000 a share. He failed in the end to take control, however. Hill and Morgan responded by creating the concept of a holding company, Northern Securities, that was not intended to restrain competition but to defend against future Harriman intrigues. As Dominick Armentano wrote in *Antitrust and Monopoly: Anatomy of a Policy Failure*, it "did not actually restrain competition" but "finalized an efficient and eminently sensible consolidation of rail properties." As evidence of this efficiency, Armentano pointed out that "rail rates on the Hill-Morgan lines continued to *decline* between November 1901 and 1903."

These all-important economic facts "played no role whatever in the final decision of the Supreme Court," however, wrote Armentano. The Supreme Court ruled against Hill and Morgan on the grounds that, although there was no actual

harm to consumers, there might be "potential harm" in the future. This is like saying that no, you did not in fact rob the First National Bank, but you just might in the future! Off to prison with you!

Unfortunately, this motivated the empire-building Justice Department bureaucrats to file even more fact- and evidence-free antitrust cases, none more important than the 1911 case against John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company, commenced by Roosevelt's attorney general, William H. Moody, in 1906.

Moody accused Standard Oil of being a monopoly "in restraint of trade" on November 15, 1906. At that time Standard Oil was arguably the most efficiently operated corporation in America, if not the world. Armentano noted that Standard's super efficiency and low prices led to an 88-percent market share by 1879, but relentless competition caused lower and lower prices and a constant decrease in its market share for decades. The price of refined petroleum per gallon fell from 9.33 cents in 1880 to 5.91 cents by 1897. Thus, "at the very pinnacle of Standard's industry control," wrote Armentano, "the cost and prices for refined oil reached some of their lowest levels in history."

The petroleum industry expanded tremendously after the turn of the century, with 147 independent refineries in existence by 1911, the year the Supreme Court judged one of these firms, Standard Oil, to be a "monopoly" (defined in all the economics textbooks as "a single seller"!). Standard Oil's share of oil production had fallen to 11 percent by 1911, but that fact was also ignored by the Supreme Court when it decided to punish Standard Oil for the "crime" of cutting prices, expanding output, and inventing myriad new products for the previous 46 years. Thus, from its very beginning, antitrust regulation was a protectionist racket used to punish successful businesses for the benefit of their sour-grape (and politically well-connected) competitors who were unwilling or incapable of pleasing customers as well as their more successful rivals, such as Standard Oil.

In 1903, Roosevelt signed a law that prohibited railroads from giving rebates to their best customers, a practice that had been created because of the intensity of competition. The law essentially outlawed this form of competitive price-cutting and established the principle that the government can dictate railroad rates through the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC). The railroad corporations had captured the ICC, however (the first commissioner of which in 1887 was one Thomas Cooley, a lawyer/lobbyist for several railroad corporations), and the result was even *less* competition.

While preparing for the 1904 presidential election, Roosevelt received campaign contributions of $50,000 from E.H. Harriman; $150,000 from J.P. Morgan; $450,000 from Morgan associate George Perkins; and $100,000 from Harriman confidant Chauncey Depew. Can you spell "pay to play"?

Politicizing Food and Drugs

By the turn of the 20th century there had been enormous advances in food safety and public health, almost entirely because of private-sector innovations. The celebrated food-safety laws enacted during the Roosevelt administration did not improve food safety, but merely politicized the food industries, which then followed the example of the crony capitalists in the railroad industry. They began using government regulation not to improve food safety, but to gain a competitive advantage and monopoly power.

There was no food-safety crisis in the early 20th century; quite the opposite. The American diet was healthier than ever.

Standard Oil refinery in Cleveland

public domain

Roosevelt, however, took political advantage of the popularity of socialist muckraking journalist Upton Sinclair, who wrote a book, *The Jungle*, about how unsightly the massive slaughter of thousands of cows, pigs, and sheep was in the Chicago-based meat-packing industry. Who would ever have imagined such a thing?

There was no public outcry about unsafe meat and there was no crisis, just a hysterical book written by a socialist political activist employed by labor unions to besmirch the meat-packing industry. The meat-packing industry had figured out how to dress, pack, and deliver safe meat products by rail cheaper and cheaper, year after year, to the detriment of myriad local butcher shops in the hinterland that were charging much higher prices. The American diet became much *healthier* as a result.

Nevertheless, always on the lookout for political gimmickry that would advance his political career, Roosevelt began attacking the meat-packing industry and signed a new meat-inspection law. Contrary to folklore, the large corporate meat packers of the day, such as Armour and Swift, *favored* the meat-inspection laws because they believed they would disadvantage their smaller competitors. As Powell explained, "In congressional testimony ... packinghouse executive Thomas E. Wilson made clear that the big Chicago packers wanted federal regulation to handicap their smaller competitors that could not afford to invest more in modern and sanitary facilities" that would be required by federal meat inspectors.

When he signed the meat-inspection act, Roosevelt also signed the Pure Food and Drug Act, which led to the creation of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Swift & Co. meat-processing plant in Chicago

public domain

The FDA was quickly "captured" by the drug industry, which, to this day, essentially runs the agency and uses regulation to mandate use of its products and force prices sky-high while legally shielding itself from liability for many of its products. It is arguably the most corrupt agency in the entire federal government. A good example of the fox-guarding-the-henhouse method of "public interest" regulation is the FDA "advisory panel" that was used to justify recommending Covid shots for children between the ages of five and 11 in 2021. As explained by the website Zero-Hedge:

> The meeting roster shows that numerous members of the committee ... worked for Pfizer or have major connections to Pfizer. Members include a former vice president of Pfizer vaccines, a recent Pfizer consultant, a recent Pfizer research grant recipient, a man who mentored a current top Pfizer vaccine executive, a man who runs a center that gives out Pfizer vaccines, the chair of a Pfizer data group, a guy who was proudly photographed taking a Pfizer vaccine, and numerous people who are already on record supporting Coronavirus vaccines for children. Meanwhile, recent FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb is on Pfizer's board of directors.

Roosevelt's Program of Land Socialism

The American pilgrims all nearly starved to death despite being surrounded by an abundance of seafood, wild game, and fruits of all kinds. Within six months, all but 38 of the original Jamestown, Virginia, settlers of 1607 were dead, having suc-

The celebrated food-safety laws enacted during the Roosevelt administration did not improve food safety, but merely politicized the food industries, which then followed the example of the crony capitalists in the railroad industry.

cumbed to famine. The 1620 Mayflower settlers in Massachusetts suffered an almost identical fate, with half of the 101 settlers dead within a few months.

The "high marshal" of the Virginia Colony, Sir Thomas Dale, determined that the cause was the system of communal, or communistic, land ownership whereby each family was given an equal share of what was produced (after the Virginia Company was paid). This meant that the man who worked diligently for 16 hours a day received the same remuneration as the man who slept under a tree all day. The system of communal land ownership destroyed the work ethic. Dale's solution was to establish private property. Each family was given their own plot of land. Once their share of the debt to the Virginia Company was paid, they were free to keep everything else. Productivity skyrocketed, women and children began participating in farming, and the rest is history; the American private property/free enterprise economy was born. The Mayflower expedition followed suit, and Massachusetts quickly began to prosper, becoming the fishing and shipbuilding hub of the new country.

Fast-forward to 1862, and the privatization of land took a huge leap forward with the federal Homestead Act. Any adult citizen could be given 160 acres of "government surveyed land" by agreeing to occupy and farm or develop it. Granted, much of the land went to railroad corporations and logging and mining corporations instead of farmers, but that is still infinitely better for society than having the land remain under the control of politicians and bureaucrats who have no personal financial stake in it. By 1900, some 250 million acres of government land had been privatized, unleashing tremendous innovation and productivity.

The Biggest Abolition of Private Property in U.S. History

Abolition of Private Property in Land and Application of All Rents of Land to Public Purpose.

—Plank #1 of *The Communist Manifesto*

No, Teddy Roosevelt wasn't a communist, but he did more than any other American politician to replace private ownership of land with political "ownership" through nationalization. In eight years, he nationalized more than 430 million acres of land under the foolish theory that government bureaucrats who don't have a personal financial stake in the land will be better managers of it than those who do. It turned out to be another gigantic subsidy or giveaway to myriad lobbying interests. As Powell explained, for them it meant "free dams, free waterway improvements, cheap water, cheap timber, cheap access to grazing lands, and other goodies" at taxpayers' expense.

It also led to a great deal of environmental degradation. Ranchers leased government land at below-market prices as a form of pork-barrel subsidy. The result was massive overgrazing of range land, some of which was literally turned into desert. Since the ranchers did not own the land, they had little or no incentive to conserve its value. Private landowners do, for the land is a valued asset to them, and people are not normally inclined to purposely destroy the value of their own investments.

Timber companies were leased millions of acres of government land on the cheap as well, giving them incentives to denude entire forests with "clearcutting" techniques that led to massive erosion. On private lands that they own, some of the same timber companies nurture their land by replanting it with "super trees" that mature much faster than your normal backyard pine and maple trees. It's all about protecting and enhancing their own assets, and it protects the environment to boot.

Roosevelt's Bureau of Reclamation also became a political boondoggle in the West, as government water was sold to favored political constituents, especially politically connected farmers, while some cities paid several times the average amount for their water — if they could even get sufficient amounts. It is a major source of conflict to this day.

Subsidized irrigation for farmers created "waste on a colossal scale," wrote Powell. "Farmers paid less than they otherwise would have, so they had fewer incentives to conserve water. They ... used water on less valuable crops such as alfalfa.... Many farmers didn't know how to maintain their irrigation systems, so the systems gradually fell apart." Many of them went bankrupt.

The War Racketeer

Bret Baier's biography claims that Roosevelt rescued "the American spirit" with his aggressive military adventurism. He denounced "the menace of peace" (after which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize!). Roosevelt promoted war, conquest, and plunder in Cuba, Hawaii, Venezuela, China, the Philippines, Panama, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Canada, and Spain.

Clearcutting operation in Oregon

Calibas/Wikimedia Commons

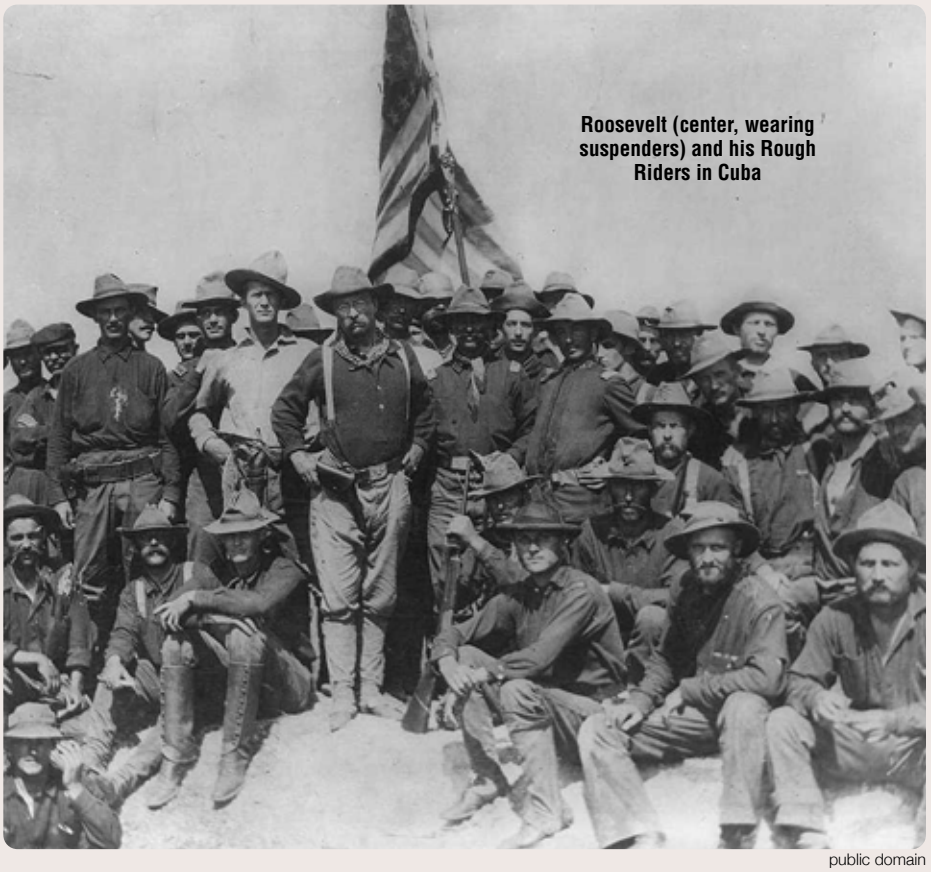
Baier got it all backward. This was not "the American spirit" of the Founding generation, but the 18th- and 19th-century *European* "spirit" of conquest, subjugation, plunder, and imperialism. That was a system whereby citizens were considered by their rulers to be primarily a source of tax revenue and cannon fodder. The Founding generation waged a war of secession against the British Empire to repudiate and escape from such a system. Roosevelt was actually a traitor to the true American spirit of peaceful relations and commerce with all nations and the use of the military solely for defense.

As assistant secretary of the Navy in the McKinley administration, Roosevelt was an ardent proponent of going to war with Spain and participated in the Spanish-American War (April-August 1898) for a short time in Cuba. The pro-war media labeled him and his cavalry contingent "the Rough Riders," and the Republican Party propaganda machine made a hero out of him for his participation in a single short battle. It then appointed him as McKinley's vice-presidential candidate in the 1900 election. He "lobbied aggressively to have himself awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor," wrote Powell, but was denied that until President Bill Clinton awarded it to him posthumously in 2001.

The great Yale University scholar William Graham Sumner explained the true meaning for Americans of the Spanish-American War in a famous 1899 essay titled "The Conquest of the United States by Spain." What the war established, he wrote, was the new policy of "war, debt, taxation, diplomacy, a grand governmental system, pomp, glory, a big army and navy, lavish expenditures, political jobbery — in a word, imperialism." The U.S. government had adopted the policies of "expansionism and imperialism," the reasons Spain had become a defunct, bankrupt empire. These policies were popular in some quarters because they appealed to "national vanity and national cupidity."

This new policy, noted Sumner, created enormous profits for "a few schemers" at the expense of the rest of American society. The United States would forevermore be "conquered" by the ideas of empire and imperialism.

Shortly after the Spanish-American War, Roosevelt intervened in the Philippine Insurrection (1899-1902), whereby the Filipinos had finally gotten rid of the Spanish empire, just as the American Colonists had gotten rid of the British Empire more than a century earlier. The United States intervened to replace Spanish subjugation of the Filipinos with American subjugation in a military operation that killed at least 200,000 Filipinos. Roosevelt "justified" this action with a combination of eugenics and imperialism by calling Filipinos "Chinese half breeds," "savages," "barbarians," and "a wild and ignorant people." "All the great masterful races," he bloviated, "have been war-like races."



Roosevelt (center, wearing suspenders) and his Rough Riders in Cuba

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After the U.S. military invaded Hawaii and took over its government (and its fruit industry), Roosevelt gave a speech in Boston in 1895 in which he said, according to historian Gregg Jones in *Honor in the Dust*, "I feel that it was a great crime against the white race that we did not annex Hawaii three years ago."

Many prominent Americans, including Mark Twain, Andrew Carnegie, and President Grover Cleveland, formed an "anti-imperialist league," but were nonchalantly dismissed by Roosevelt as "men of a bygone age."

The purpose of birthing "a superpower," as Baier called America, was explained in another famous essay, this one by Marine Corps General Smedley Butler, who served in the Corps from 1898-1930 and was the most highly decorated Marine in history when he retired. In his essay "War Is a Racket," he described the essence of his military career:

> I helped make Mexico ... safe for American oil interests.... I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street.... I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers.... I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests.... In China I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested.

The "record of racketeering is long," Butler concluded. This, above all else, is Theodore Roosevelt's foreign-policy legacy: The founding father of military racketeering. ■

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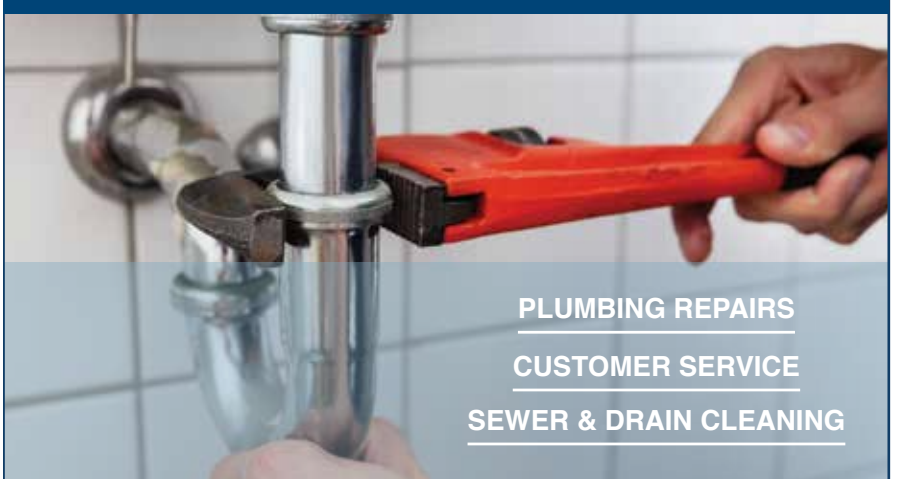

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Sloth, Diligence, and Moral Clarity in the Post-Christian West

AT A GLANCE

- The American education system is a breeding ground for the Seven Deadly Sins.
- Sloth is one of the most popular contemporary sins, which is why it's so hard to explain to modern people.
- Sloth can be countered with the virtue Diligence, as the ancients teach us.
- The next installment of this series will focus on the sin of Wrath and its opposite virtue, Patience.

The New American *magazine presents this new bimonthly feature, "Culture Corner," offering a deep focus on contemporary cultural issues viewed through the prism of history, art, literature, music, and theology. The goal is to recover and reinvigorate the moral and virtuous purposes of the humanities, long forgotten and compromised by materialist pedagogues and Marxist socialist ideologues in our schools and universities. In the famous description by the Roman poet Horace in* Ars Poetica *(19 B.C.), the ultimate ideal of humanistic learning is* prodesse et delectare *(to instruct and to delight). Down through the ages of Western culture, the purpose of humane letters has been the triumph of Truth and Beauty: truth to instruct us in morality and knowledge, and beauty to delight us with joy and gratitude. The inaugural Culture Corner series features a seven-article reflection on virtue and vice, from Classical and Christian sources going back to the Bible, to the ancient Greeks and Romans, and through the Middle Ages to our own world. This is article two of seven; the first appeared in our December issue.*

by Dr. Duke Pesta

As an English professor who has taught at seven universities and colleges for more than three decades, there is a lot I can lament — and have lamented — about education in the postmodern world. On our campuses, from major research universities to small liberal-arts colleges, students in Western countries are exposed to a gamut of ideologies, theories, and highly politicized invective. And the more transgressive, salacious, materialistic, and anti-traditional the message, the more it bleeds into classes across disciplines, from the fine arts and humanities to math and science. This extreme ideological orthodoxy and progressive dogma in our colleges and public schools has transformed American educational institutions into uncontested sites of anti-Christian dialectic, traducing traditional virtue and creating breeding grounds for the Seven Deadly Sins.

In Western culture, the oldest universities have been around for almost a millennium,

Dr. Duke Pesta is executive director at Freedom-Project Academy, a classical school that offers online classes in real time for kindergarten through high school. He has also taught at seven universities over the last 30 years.

The extreme ideological orthodoxy and progressive dogma in our colleges and public schools has transformed American educational institutions into uncontested sites of anti-Christian dialectic, traducing traditional virtue and creating breeding grounds for the Seven Deadly Sins.

the work of Christian invention and faith, cathedrals of knowledge and study dedicated to the glory of God and the illumination of the human condition. Out of these unique and forward-thinking institutions emerged great works of theology, philosophy, humane arts and letters, and the rise of modern science. Over the space of a few centuries, they produced cultures that created the Renaissance, discovered America, and circumnavigated the globe. A few centuries after that came the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and the rise of individual liberty and prosperity.

The history of higher education in Western culture has been an unrelenting triumph of discovery, technology, and burgeoning understanding based on truth, deduction, and empirical evidence. And yet, in less than 70 years, postmodernism has deconstructed philosophy, stripped the altars of faith, co-opted science in the cause of political power, and relativized truth while conferring infallibility onto progressive ideology. Despite the grinding indoctrination, the retrograde dumbing-down, and the hypocritical intolerance at the core of contemporary education, the thing that worries me most is the quasi-fascist suffocation of curiosity in our young generations. It has been a perfect storm. On the one hand, we have a postmodern educational system that denies truth, enshrines feelings, and denies moral — and even empirical — absolutes when they dare challenge our most sacrosanct fetishes and fantasies. On the other hand, we have staggering advances in technology — from smartphones to artificial intelligence — that make obsolete personal literacy, knowledge, and even memory.

"The Seven Deadly Sins: Sloth" by Hieronymus Bosch

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Predictably, godless postmodern education has turned virtue into vice, and vice into virtue. For my students, for instance, "lust" is just another synonym for "desire." In my teaching career, I have asked thousands of students in hundreds of classrooms to define lust. Most don't know the definition, and those who venture a response define it as desire, every time. They cannot read at grade level or do college math, but they do know that their desires are beyond critique because they *feel* them. To suggest that some forms of desire are dangerous, or addictive, or — Heaven help us — immoral is to be guilty of bigotry and exclusionism.

The reality is that many modern students are not the least bit interested in *knowing* things — they are utterly uncurious. You can teach students who are bored, or ignorant, or even hostile, but you cannot educate a student who has no curiosity at all. Such students have always been, but now they are legion. The first thing I do on the first day of class is ask students if they have any interest in any aspect of the class.

Almost exclusively, they admit that they do not, and they view their lack of curiosity as a *virtue*. They are blindly secure in the idea that if they have to write a paper, or calculate a mortgage payment, or learn about the Civil War, their technology will "do it" for them. And yet, with all that information at their fingertips, they will not use it when they encounter a word in their reading assignment that they don't know. They will not take five seconds to look the word up on their phones or laptops. And this is a perfect example of how the sin of Sloth thrives, despite postmodern guarantees that 2,000 years of painful moral experience and historical precedent have nothing left to teach us.

Dante Alighieri

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In the 1949 film *The Third Man*, Orson Welles' character, Harry Lime, offers a memorable reflection on the differences between the chaotic genius of the Italian Renaissance and the placid stability of Swiss democracy:

> In Italy for 30 years under the Borgias they had warfare, terror, murder, and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had brotherly love — they had 500 years of democracy and peace, and what did that produce? The cuckoo clock.

To modernize the trope with Sloth in mind: Over thousands of years of study and invention under Western culture, people had the complex equations of physics, the decoding of the language of DNA, and the splitting of the atom. In postmodern America, people have diversity, equity, and inclusion; critical race theory; and social-emotional learning, and what has that produced? Students who can't read a clock.

The *New York Post* reported that a statewide cellphone ban in schools revealed that

> scores of [New York City] teenagers can't read traditional clocks ... because students figured the skill would be useless in the digital era…. Many teens have no clue what time it is during the course of the school day, teachers said. "It's a source of frustration because everyone wants to know how many minutes are left in class…. It finally got to the point where I started saying, 'Where's the big hand and where's the little hand?'"

The frustrated public-school teachers overlook the fact that their own slothful curriculum and professional development rejected technologies such as memorizing multiplication tables, learning cursive writing, reading whole books, and, yes, telling time on an analog clock. And while many may gape at the fact that 15-year- old students cannot tell time, most of the students are not particularly bothered by that fact. The real takeaway is that the only reason kids are interested in telling time is because "everyone wants to know how many minutes are left in class." They want digital clocks, not clock literacy, because they need to know how soon the class is done and over. The wages of Sloth indeed.

The Diligent Study of Sloth Down Through Western Culture

Of all the sins that comprise the Seven Deadly Sins, Sloth is the most difficult to make sense of when dealing with contemporary audiences. The other six sins — Pride, Envy, Wrath, Lust, Greed, and Gluttony — are relatively clear and direct articulations of the evil these concepts propagate. Even the virtuous "antidote" of Sloth — Diligence — comes across as rather vague in the company of more-exalted virtues such as Humility, Chastity, and Generosity. In the Classical world of Greece and Rome the vice was known as ἀκηδία (*akedia*, the state of being without care, or listlessness), while in late Roman and early Christian Latin the word was *acedia* (torpor or apathy). Initially, the word literally meant "exhaustion" or "severe fatigue," and in moralistic and philosophical writing *acedia* came to represent a kind of spiritual and physical lethargy that sapped the soul and enervated the body. As Christianity advanced across Medieval Europe, *acedia* became associated with eremitical life and monastery culture, redefined as a sinful condition that interfered with or impeded the ability to pray, study, or even engage in physical work and exercise.

The sin was so debilitating for praying eremites that it was attributed to the demon Acedia — also known as the Noonday Demon — whose evil manifested at or around noon, creating despair and extreme distraction for those seeking to commune with God in prayer. The name of the demon can be traced back to the Psalms: "Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday" (91:6). The fourth-century ascetic, monk, and theologian Evagrius the Solitary (345-399 A.D.) wrote that the demon

> presses his attack upon the monk about the fourth hour and besieges the soul until the eighth hour. First, he makes it seem that the sun barely moves, if at all, and that the day is fifty hours long…. Then too he instills in the heart of the monk a hatred for the place, a hatred for this very life itself, a hatred for manual labor. He leads him to reflect that charity has departed from among the brethren, that there is no one to give encouragement. Should there be someone at this period who happens to offend him in some way or other, this too the demon uses to contribute further to his hatred.

To the modern reader, Evagrius is describing that which we call procrastination — the tendency to put off important tasks, despite the consequences that arise from such delays. For the ancients, this type of sloth would be attributed to sin: a weak and corrupted will that invites in the demon of *acedia*.

But in our therapeutic and soulless culture, the scourge of procrastination is transferred from individual will to the breakdown of brain chemistry, where the limbic system, the origin of our emotions, overpowers the prefrontal cortex, the seat of our rationality. As the modern studies of biology and chemistry increasingly posit a human animal devoid of free will and independent choice, the concept of sin — an idea rooted entirely in choice and will — is no longer possible. And sin — and even crime — is now being classified as syndromes and diseases, as pharmacology displaces punishment, rehabilitation, and prayer. Of necessity then, the Seven Deadly Sins are refigured as constricting social constructs far beyond our ephemeral will. In short order they are no longer evils at all, and in many cases are classified as net benefits. Pride, for instance, the *primus inter pares* (first among equals) of the Seven Deadly Sins, becomes nothing more than a healthy and uplifting kind of self-esteem.

Greg Peters, in "On Sloth and Vigilance," argues that King David understood and wrestled with sloth. In Psalm 42:5 and 11, David laments, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." The beleaguered king urges his own soul — at his time of great need — to rally beyond slothful passivity and actively assert praise for God, his savior. A similar insight about *acedia* was the subject of one of the *Institutes* of John Cassian (360-435 A.D.). Speaking of David's struggles in Psalm 119:28, Cassian opines:

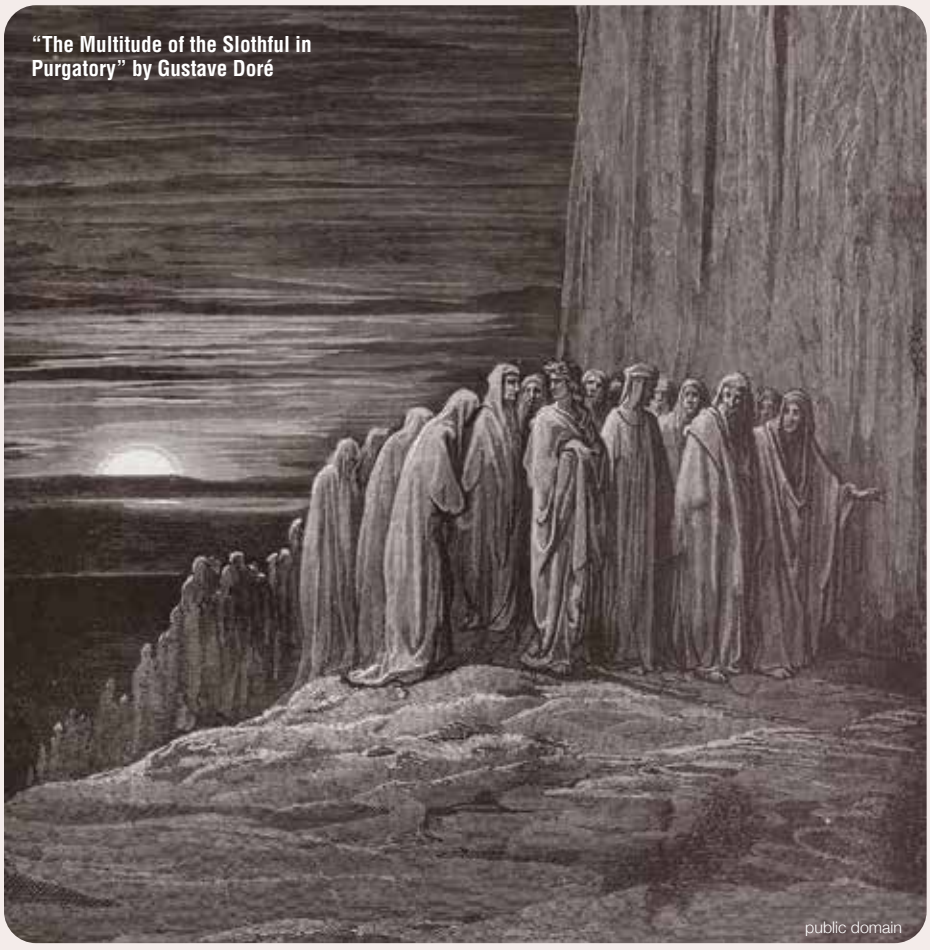
> In one verse blessed David beautifully expressed all the misfortunes of this disease [*acedia*], when he said: "My soul slept from weariness" — that is, from acedia. Quite correctly did he say that not the body but the soul slept. For, indeed, the soul that has been wounded by the weapon of this disturbance is asleep with regard to any contemplation of virtue and any insight provided by the spiritual senses.

Like Evagrius, Cassian was a monk and an ascetic. The Christian understanding of *acedia* — leading up to the fall of the Western Roman empire (476 A.D.) — was deeply impacted by early eremitic life and worship, in which the extreme solitude of the monks gave rise to sloth and lack of diligence. Pope Gregory I (540-604 A.D.) merged the differing definitions and nuances of *acedia*, adding the idea of sadness or melancholy (*tristitia*) to the previous conception of despair and spiritual inactivity. Gregory shortened the list of deadly sins from eight to seven, and promoted the word "sloth" (*ignavia*) over *acedia*. The linguistic change also broadened the scope of the sin to include such potential interpretations as "laziness" and "idleness."

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 A.D.), in his vast compendium *Summa Theologica*, explains Sloth as "sluggishness of the mind which neglects to begin good. It is evil in its effect, if it so oppresses man as to draw him away entirely from good deeds." Citing Saint John of Damascus (born circa 675 A.D.), Aquinas expands the definition of Sloth to include "an oppressive sorrow, which … so weighs upon man's mind, that he wants to do nothing; thus acid things are also cold." Following the reorganization of Pope Gregory I, Aquinas references both the earlier connotations of *acedia* and the expanded definition that includes sadness and melancholy.

As with so many aspects of sin and virtue, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) offers one of the most expansive accounts of Sloth, including it in the realms of action, psychology, and spirituality. In Canto VII of *Inferno*, those damned to Hell for Sloth appear in the Fifth Circle, punished along with the wrathful and the sullen, and are submerged under the muddy water of the river Styx. They are almost obscured in mud and water, an apt punishment for those who "had feet of clay" when it came to fulfilling the virtue of zeal (Diligence). The drudgery of walking through

Of necessity then, the Seven Deadly Sins are refigured as constricting social constructs far beyond our ephemeral will. In short order, they are no longer evils at all, but in many cases are classified as net benefits.



"The Multitude of the Slothful in Purgatory" by Gustave Doré

deep mud expresses how Sloth bogs one down physically and spiritually, impeding progress in life and stagnating virtue under sin. In punishing the slothful along with the sinners of Wrath and Sullenness, Dante suggests a kinship among these evils. All three distract the soul and misuse the body. The sullen and the slothful allow mind and body to atrophy in peevishness and torpor.

But it is in the Fourth Terrace of *Purgatorio* (Purgatory) where Dante most explicitly explains the consequences of Sloth. In Purgatory, the souls of sinners are punished and chastened before they are allowed to move up the mountain and closer to God. Dante and his guide, Virgil, are conversing when a stampede of sinners comes running past them at a fast clip. Dante is informed that they must run without stopping around this circle of the mountain. The rapid speed and seemingly endless running is how the sinners begin to undo the Sloth of their bodily existence. As they labor, the slothful must shout out historical examples of good deeds done in timely speed:

> "Mary ran to the hills with haste!"
> And then:
> "Caesar, to subjugate Ilerda, thrust
> Hard at Marseilles and raced on into Spain!"

The Mary mentioned here is the mother of Jesus, who made haste to visit Elizabeth after Gabriel informed her that Elizabeth was with child. The allusion to Caesar relates to an anecdote in which he was hurrying to meet Pompey in battle in Spain, but quickly stopped to wage an intense siege against Marseilles before going ahead to defeat Pompey at Ilerda (Catalonia). At the end of the line of runners, those last in the race also shout out famous examples of Sloth. For instance, one sinner yells about the Israelites who failed to follow Moses into the Promised Land. These examples of zeal are the "whip" that punishes, and the examples of Sloth are the "bridle" that brings contemplation of the sin.

The Protestant reformers — who based much of their theology around the virtues of diligence and zeal — also wrote incisively about the evils of Sloth. Martin Luther (1483-1546), in his introduction to Psalm 117, expounds upon *acedia*:

> This is a dangerous disease, a clever and malicious trick of the devil. Thus he makes people bold, smug, forward, and ready for every kind of error and schism. This is really the vice known as *ἀκηδία,* slothfulness in God's service, against which St. Paul exhorts us to be fervent in spirit [Romans 12:11]. And in Revelations the Holy Spirit says of such people: "Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth" [3:15-16].

Luther created the template for the Protestant work ethic in part by rejecting passivity and sloth in spirituality and our relations with other people. He viewed hard work and diligence as a sacred duty to God, and he juxtaposed active work and zeal against the monastic retreat from the "real world."

John Calvin (1509-1564) also viewed Sloth as a great detriment to holiness and a form of dangerous materialism. Warning about overindulging in the pleasures of the flesh, Calvin argued that such behavior

> produces sloth and sleep; even so they who indulge in earthly cares and pleasures, think of nothing else, being under the power of spiritual lethargy…. We must … carry on a warfare in this world; and [the Apostle Peter] reminds us that we have to do with no common enemy, but one who, like a lion, runs here and there, ready to devour. He hence concludes that we ought carefully to watch…. But we too often turn peace into sloth, and hence it comes that the enemy then circumvents and overwhelms us; for, as though placed beyond the reach of danger, we indulge ourselves according to the will of the flesh.

For Calvin, the best way to counteract the effects of Sloth — and indeed all serious vices — is to don the full armor of God.

One of the most chilling explanations of the workings of Sloth occurs in *The Screwtape Letters*, in which C.S. Lewis

Martin Luther

Michael v Aichberger/Adobe Stock

(1898-1963) writes about how sloth and indolence can quietly steal a man's life away. The demon Screwtape offers the following advice to his nephew Wormwood, who is trying to secure a human soul for damnation:

> You can make him do nothing at all for long periods. You can keep him up late at night, not roistering, but staring at a dead fire in a cold room. All the healthy and outgoing activities which we want him to avoid can be inhibited and *nothing* given in return, so at last he may say, as one of my own patients said on his arrival down here, "I now see that I spent most of my life in doing *neither* what I ought *nor* what I liked." The Christians describe the enemy as one "without whom Nothing is strong." And Nothing is very strong: strong enough to steal away a man's best years, not in sweet sins but in dreary flickering of the mind over it knows not what and know not why, in the gratification of curiosities so feeble that the man is only half aware of them, in drumming of fingers and kicking of heels.... It does not matter how small the sins are provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing.

In light of this passage, how many of us of any age — when looking back on the lives we have lived — actually realize how much of our time and opportunities we have squandered on things of no consequence to us or those around us.

We began our discussion of Sloth by examining postmodern culture. Lewis' friend Dorothy L. Sayers (1893-1957) was a novelist, scholar, playwright, critic, and translator who wrote the finest and most erudite English version of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in the 20th century. She understood the Seven Deadly Sins as much as Lewis and Dante did. In her *Christian Letters to a Post-Christian World*, she was one of the earliest intellectuals to explain that postmodernism was in reality the birth of a new worldview predicated on the absence of Christ; a worldview that legitimated the Vices simply because they opposed the Christian Virtues. Her description of Sloth can be applied equally to postmodernism:

> It is the sin which believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, loves nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing, and only remains alive because there is nothing it would die for.

Diligence: Morality in Motion

Across our discussion about Sloth, it has become quite clear why Diligence is such a powerful virtue. The simplified gist of Newton's First Law of Motion is that a body in motion stays in motion, and a key aspect of physics is the study of bodies in motion. As spiritual creatures inhabiting material bodies and subject to the limits of time, our best course is motion. Every choice, decision, and thought ultimately brings us closer to God or moves us farther away from Him. The Seven Deadly Sins are choices that move us away from Him in dramatic fashion. At the opening of this essay, I pointed out the difficulty of explaining Sloth to modern audiences. The confusion, I think, is that Sloth by definition is the refusal to move — a kind of protected stasis. For many today, "staying put" is considered safe. It's neither bold nor reckless, but safe and neutral.

Many of my students who clearly don't believe in God like to identify as agnostic. They admit they don't "know" whether God exists, and say that they are comfortable as agnostics until they have

"proof." They understand that *if* they believe in God, they would have to actively limit some of their behaviors: a very diligent type of recognition. And surely a just God would not punish them for being agnostics in "good faith." This is a very calculated kind of Sloth, much more wicked in intention than that of sluggards who are content to waste their days in trivial indolence. Of course, these students have already given up the game. They have conceded that Virtue is of God — should He exist — but their theoretical "good faith" belief in God's justice suggests neither agnosticism nor atheism. It's rather like Saint Augustine's emerging conversion to Christianity as reported in his *Confessions*. As a pagan, he had led a life of hedonism and lust. He was ready to believe in Christian virtue, but unwilling to be diligent in mastering it, like some type of sexual agnostic. His famous prayer to God, "Give me chastity and temperance, but not yet," is the same type of calculated Sloth practiced by my students.

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"Diligence," from "Virtues and Vices" by Heinrich Aldegrever

In Dante's *Inferno*, Hell is also a place of fatal stasis. The condemned sinners go on suffering in very active ways, but the ability to change is lost forever. Literally, Hell is a place where Sloth is frozen and Diligence lost forever. On the outskirts of Hell, immediately upon entering through the gate, Dante and Virgil find themselves in the Vestibule of the Futile:

> Here sighing, and here crying, and loud railing
> Smote on the restless air, with lamentation,
> So that at first, I wept to hear such wailing.

The sinners in the Vestibule are moral and spiritual agnostics, creatures so slothful that they were unable to distinguish right from wrong and good from evil. Futility is all that's left to them. Virgil explains:

> The dismal company
> Of wretched spirits thus find the guerdon due
> Whose lives knew neither praise nor infamy;
> They're mingled with that caitiff angel-crew
> Who against God rebelled not, nor to Him
> Were faithful, but to self alone were true.

The refusal to act — one way or another — is still a choice. And the refusal to choose between God and nothingness is the greatest and most damning type of Sloth. The image of those bereft angels who sat out the battle for Heaven, siding neither with God nor Satan, is stark and terrifying.

For refusing to choose, they nevertheless find themselves on the brink of Hell, not as rulers or resident demons, but as lost souls who have forfeited forever the ability to choose, change, and be diligent:

> Heaven cast them forth — their presence there would dim
> The light; deep Hell rejects so base a herd,
> Lest sin should boast itself because of them.

Slothful cowardice bars them from Heaven and Hell proper. They exist in a place between nothingness and Hell:

> The dreary huddle has no hope of death,
> Yet its blind life trails on so low and crass
> That every other fate it envieth.
> No reputation in the world it has,
> Mercy and doom hold it alike in scorn —
> Let us not speak of these; but look, and pass.

Nothingness is what they chose, and nothing is their fate. They are forgotten, leaving no reputation behind, jealous of those both in Heaven and deep Hell, whose own agency is acknowledged, at least.

The genius of Christianity is that we are pre-saved from our sins by the sacrifice of Christ. In all other religions — and secular utopias as well — you get access to "heaven" by following the script. It's one long audition, and if you have rehearsed well, then you are granted entrance. But the revelation of Christ is unique — we already have His salvation. We don't — and cannot — *earn* His grace. It's already been bequeathed to us. All we are asked to do is be "diligent." Despite our sins, addictions, and failures, we must remain diligent: Just keep going, keep choosing better, keep persevering. There is no bar to be hurdled — the race is already won. From this perspective, it's extremely easy to see the evil of Sloth. It is a rejection and repudiation of that grace. And there can be no doubt that in the Book of Revelation it is Sloth on trial when God says: "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." ■

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Representative Kat Cammack (R-Fla.) and Mayor Timothy Marden

YES, JBS WORKS!

by Timothy Marden

A good story often ends well, and even though our small-town story is still being written, the first few chapters are very compelling. Why? Because the spirit of John Birch, Robert Welch, and Larry McDonald is playing out in real time.

I am the elected mayor of Newberry, Florida, a city of 9,000 people spread out across 63 square miles. Founded in 1895, it is one of the largest cities in Florida in terms of land area, and has its roots in agriculture and phosphate mining.

I am also the director of marketing for The John Birch Society. Prior to being elected mayor I was a city commissioner for Newberry, and this is where my story as a JBS member-turned-mayor begins.

My walk to City Hall started in 2012. The country was four years into the Obama administration, and things were still not good from the 2008 housing crisis. But I was encouraged by the mayor at the time to run for city commissioner. I ran, and I lost. Undeterred, I tried again and won. Why? Messaging. I was just speaking the principles I learned from the Birch Society and read about in *The New American*: Small government, more responsibility. I took my oath and stuck to it.

Since 2013, I have been repeatedly reelected, sometimes unopposed, on a JBS platform. I wore JBS on my sleeve. In subsequent city elections, other JBS members were elected, as well. The city has really embraced Americanist philosophies and practices. Newberry has become an incubator of sorts in the effort to get government back to basics.

We have had lots of victories along the way. One of our first wins was eliminating several city-funded programs outside core government responsibilities, such as "Meals on Wheels," a city chamber, and a food pantry. Trust me, these were not political winners.

Maybe it was naïveté or just plain stupidity to keep trying. But the truth is, it worked. So, we kept doing it. With each budget, we kept taxes the same or lowered them. We lowered our own pay and started talking about value instead of cost, and volunteerism over government solutions.

My favorite victory was winning the Covid battle with our County Commission. Although Florida is lauded as "Freedom Florida," there are a few very blue counties. Newberry is in one of them, Alachua County. The home of my alma mater, the University of Florida, Alachua County is a leftist Petri dish.

During Covid, the county flip-flopped on a mask mandate after having a joint commission meeting with the county seat, the city of Gainesville. The county had lifted the mandate, but the city of Gainesville scared the commissioners into reversing their decision.

Consequently, our City Commission called an emergency meeting and asserted the principles outlined in *The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates* by Pastor Matt Trewhella. We voted unanimously to ignore the county's mask mandate. In our view, adults can make decisions based on what is best for themselves, their families, and their businesses. What a concept!

Fast-forward to 2025. Small government and personal responsibility is now our city brand. We have become an outpost of independence, both physically and philosophically, in blue Alachua County. We attract like-minded folks by just focusing on what government was meant to do. This does not happen, though, without sufficient understanding among the electorate.

People and groups rarely come to the City Commission hat-in-hand anymore. Citizens have formed multiple volunteer groups. Free-market ideas flourish. Hurricane response is a community effort. The shuttered food pantry expanded from a 10' x 10' shed to two much larger buildings feeding hundreds more per month.

Timothy Marden is national director of marketing for The John Birch Society.

God FAMILY COUNTRY

Without a social-engineering agenda, our City Commission meetings are short and seldom. The City Commission meets twice a month for about two hours per meeting. We set the table for businesses to succeed, and then get out of the way for private enterprise to work. A company recently announced a $66 million agriculture technology business on the east side of town along a main artery.

Birching is not a passive endeavor; it is a lifestyle. It is a mission to preserve our nation. We cannot do that from the keyboard alone, but must do something actionable from the JBS *Bulletin*.

This year, Newberry will be celebrating America's 250th birthday in a big way. In April, we will be producing a reenactment of the Battles of Lexington and Concord, Paul Revere riding his horse included. Both events were pivotal to the ensuing American Revolution. Because this will take place during our Spring Festival, we will have British soldiers marching through the crowd and "harassing" the festival vendors and patrons to ensure they are paying their taxes. As a counterpoint, we will have the Colonial militia trying to raise resistance groups like the Sons of Liberty. Imagine being in one of our downtown restaurants when a British squad comes in and "arrests" a "traitor" to King George.

In July, we will have a 100-element parade of significant American events. A float, a car, a marching band, and walking characters will all be included. This parade will proceed in chronological order, starting with the earliest and ending with the most recent American achievements.

The third event will be turning the inside of our municipal building into a replica of Independence Hall, complete with pale green table cloths, ink wells, books, and feather pens. We will have a couple actors reciting the just cause of liberty throughout the day and inviting attendees to learn about the great elements and purpose of the Constitution.

All this resulted from little bits of repeated action. I invested $1,100 on my first winning campaign to "do something about it." You can, too. Start small and grow from there. Get others to help you. The appetite in America is there. There is an awakening happening. Now is the time to move!

The JBS agenda works because it is America's agenda. Restoring the Republic from the ground up *will work*. It is working here in my town, and is starting to take hold in surrounding towns. Our best days are ahead. Please go out and write a few chapters of your own story — no excuses! I would love to hear about your success, or how I and the Birch Society can help. ■

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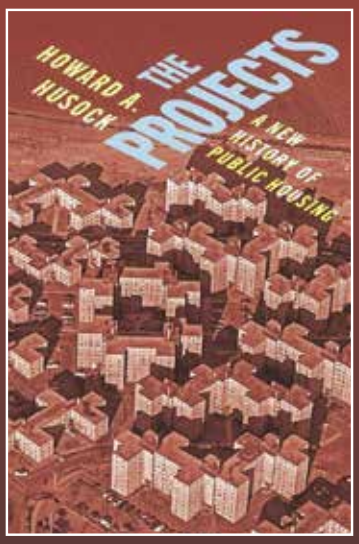

by William P. Hoar

***The Projects: A New History of Public Housing*,** by Howard A. Husock, New York: New York University Press, 2025, 240 pages, hardcover.

The initial sentences of *The Projects: A New History of Public Housing* cut through a subject that is often congested with academic underbrush, likening current public housing to a modern-day poorhouse — "a residence of last resort." In clear language, author Howard A. Husock describes a median public household in the United States. With an annual income of about $9,000, residents are living amid poorly maintained structures with high rates of crime as well as numerous social and physical ills.

Husock is a senior fellow in domestic policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute and the author of numerous books on the general housing theme. His writing has appeared in, among other publications, *The New York Times*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

The scene is set straightforwardly in *The Projects*: "Only 3 percent of public housing households comprise two spouses with children; 32 percent are single-parent families. (The remainder are mainly the elderly poor.) It is housing not just for people in poverty, but, disproportionately, racially segregated housing for the Black poor." Though the author will not ignore others, he doesn't shy at these facts: Some 42 percent of those living in public housing in this country are black, "in a nation where they make up just 13 percent of the US population."

We are told that after such residents enter today's public housing (which is essentially a synonym for "the projects" in this volume), they usually live there for long periods of time, an average of seven years. (After the book was written, the author updated the figures to 89 percent of residents of public and subsidized housing living there more than five years, and 65 percent more than 10 years.)

Movement Contrived at a Museum

With such statistics and a seemingly well-defined theme, many may be surprised when the author apparently changes lanes, making a case for "public housing" being born almost a century ago, not in Congress or the White House (that will come later), but at the Modern Housing Exhibition held in New York City's Museum of Modern Art.

The resulting projects, as you might imagine, were not supposed to be run-down magnets of violence. After all, the elites specifically planned otherwise. The organizers and sponsors of the 1934 exhibit were the *crème de la crème* — for example, philanthropist Abby Aldrich Rockefeller (wife of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.), publishers of major newspapers, the president of Columbia University, two governors of New York state (past and then-current), and the first U.S. secretary of labor. They were nobly against the abhorrent "slums" of their day, and for "slum clearance," which meant flattening the then-existing neighborhoods housing the poor.

The Modern Housing Exhibition, with a catalog entitled "America Can't Have Housing," may have had a magnanimous intent. As quoted in a book that accompanied the exhibition, its purpose, among other aims, was to discuss "the radical changes which must be made in our social philosophy and public policy in order to improve the housing conditions of the masses of the American people." This was, writes Husock, "progressivism at its most confident." Photographs of the exhibition are included in *The Projects*, and Husock skillfully compiles key aspects of what ensued over the following decades.

Politics are not ignored as Husock summarizes how the New Deal became involved and the passage of the 1937 Housing Act, incorporating into law the visions of the quixotic crusaders. The author recognizes that the legislation incorporated the "dual focus of the housing exhibition — to build housing for the poor that would be 'safe and sanitary' and to remake cities through the demolition of existing poor neighborhoods."

Though most of the book centers on America, the rest of the world isn't overlooked. Husock recalls that supporters of the

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top-down movement included one key woman nicknamed (affectionately, we are told) "Communist Catherine" Bauer, others who became admirers of Adolf Hitler, and, in one case, a fan of Hitler's housing policies.

We get previews of what is to come as the National Housing Act of 1949 takes effect in various U.S. cities. There was "no thought given to the possibility that, by competing with privately owned low-rent housing, public housing might make poor neighborhoods even shabbier by drawing rental income away from private landlords. All those assumptions would prove to have consequences."

However, intrusive government isn't the answer — it is the problem. Recent events reinforce that point. Indeed, Husock not long ago (independent of this book) explained how the promised rent freeze by then-New York City mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani, an avowed socialist, would cripple the landlords in the Big Apple (who would nonetheless still have to make repairs). A board appointed by the mayor sets rent levels for some 960,000 rent-stabilized units in the city. As it is, low turnover in regulated units drives up prices on nonregulated units, as Husock wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* several months ago. This is, he explained, "one reason rents for available units keep rising even as the city has been losing population."

Now mayor, Mamdani recently acknowledged that he would be leaving his rent-stabilized apartment after he was sworn into office. As you read this, the socialist and his wife are ensconced in the 11,000-square-foot Gracie Mansion.

Initial Enthusiasm

While the author's leanings are clear, he is even-handed — which makes his ultimate conclusions more convincing. There was, as it happens, a "golden age" of public housing of sorts, though when the underlying premises changed, so did the results. At first, as we read, housing "was to be part of the New Deal social insurance contract, along with old-age pensions and public employment jobs. By marrying housing reform with the New Deal, public housing was brought into life."

Watching the pro-government advocates stirs up memories of the tale about the frog who learns his lesson too late: If it is put into a pot of boiling water, the frog will immediately try to jump out. However, if it is placed into a pot of cool water that's gradually heated until it boils, the frog will supposedly stay put and never try to jump out.

Similarly, in the case of public housing, the danger was not immediately apparent. Husock doesn't use the "boiling frog" analogy, but he does note that living in the projects was not supposed

> to be rent-free, nor was it meant to be limited to the very poorest. The local housing authorities were meant to be public versions of private real estate management, drawing enough rent revenues to maintain the structures.

Snippets are provided about the early days of the imposition of public housing, before the "heat" was turned up. These include, for example, excerpts drawn from oral histories collected in a book about Chicago whose very title sounds bizarre to modern ears: *When Public Housing Was Paradise.* These residents recall basketball tournaments, arts and crafts, field trips, and countless happy memories about growing up in various projects throughout the United States. Those in this part of *The Projects* with (perhaps selective) reminiscences are Diana Ross (New York), Elvis Presley (Memphis), Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor (New York) and (all from Chicago) former Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, baseball star Kirby Puckett, and the actor known as Mr. T.

The notion, popular in some quarters, of the projects becoming launching pads is illusive. As the author puts it:

> While the message of "up and out" may have ultimately been embraced, it has never been explicit in the goals or theoretical foundation of the projects. If anything, from the very start, the idea that public housing was a program for the working poor was in tension ... with the idea that it should serve the poorest Americans.

There might have been a pleasant interlude in some places, but for most it turned out to be a false dawn.

Relatively recent data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reveal that average public-housing residents lived in public housing for 11.5 years.

What No Longer Exists

There are more than a score of black-and-white images in the book, which help tell graphic stories in themselves — going from early U.S. Housing Authority posters demanding "Cross Out Slums," to many of various parts of the United States showing what was destroyed (including many vibrant neighborhoods) by slum clearance, to the famous photos of the Pruitt-Igoe building implosion in St. Louis that became emblematic of the failure of federal housing projects.

The book fairly relates the crusading side of the story — such as one Methodist Episcopal Church leader saying that the "tenement is an impediment to God's plan for a home."

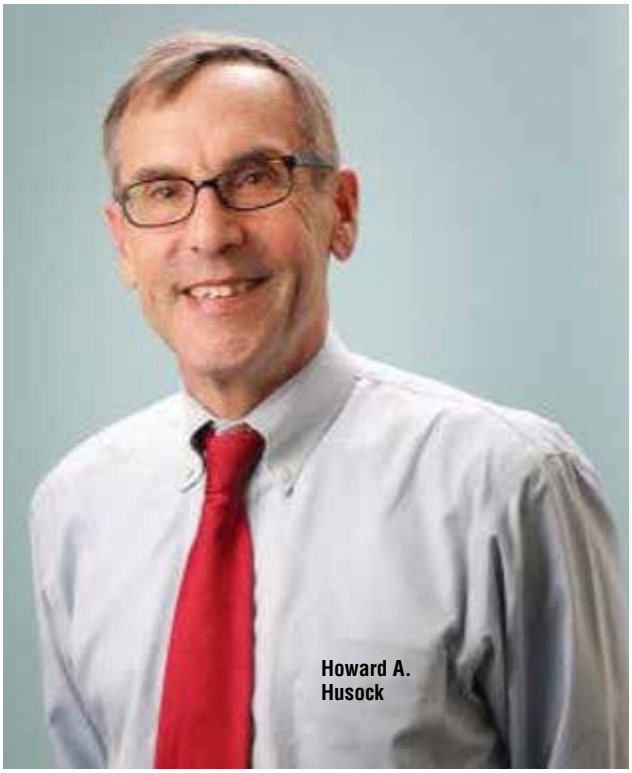
But the author, more importantly, also succeeds in telling the "more nuanced picture of the pre-project 'slums.'" The images (from the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh) of the local Hill District are the opposite of hellscapes — boasting small homes (even with "picket fences") and businesses lining cobblestoned streets. Checkers are being played by district residents. That said, the author does acknowledge the crowding and other issues of the locale.

That was pre-wrecking ball. In the most poignant sections of his volume, Husock describes, among other points, the large numbers of black Americans, "who were concentrated in the Hill District, who owned their own homes." The 1940 federal Census of Housing, he goes on, which was the "the first of its kind," reported

> that there were 13,539 nonwhite tenants in Pittsburgh — but also the 1,964 nonwhite owner-occupants of their own homes. In other words, these were families who were building wealth through ownership of homes and land. Clearance meant not only that their homes were taken at whatever compensation was deemed appropriate at the time but also that future appreciation of the land was denied the owners.

Chicago was also said to have "blighted" areas. Still, there were many who lived there who were opposed to public housing, and they were responsible for posters placed in their nearby shop windows with a slogan saying, "Slum clearance is Negro clearance."

This was not simply a "black" issue. The scope of *The Projects* is wide. Also cleared were, for instance, low-income Irish-American neighborhoods in the Boston area. Housing projects were built in an historic neighborhood around the Bunker Hill battlefield site. (The cover photo of the book shows an example of what came elsewhere in the Boston area, the Columbia Point high-rise housing project, which was later demolished.)


Howard A. Husock

Locals saw what was happening. A columnist in a black newspaper in Pittsburgh in 1950 was asking, "What about the churches, schools, business neighborhood associations, civic groups? All of them are part of the whole problem of uprooting the lives of many people, whose patterns of living have been labeled, 'not desirable, not acceptable, not endurable.'"

Big government can do some things well. Destruction is high on that list. Readers with imagination can conjure up what is missed: laughter, honking automobiles, curious sounds, and tantalizing smells. And what is left? Visualize an environment as stark and bleak as a battlefield won by progressives.

The statistics offer a hint of the scope: By 2018, about 250,000 American public-housing units had been demolished. Even today, 1.6 million Americans live in public-housing projects. HUD reported in 2023 that the number of public-housing units was 886,000, as well as 2.75 million in "housing choice voucher" units.

Picture Pittsburgh in the year 1956 in your mind's eye, with the fruits of "urban renewal demolition." Husock summarizes that summer,

> when some thirteen hundred structures were razed, displacing about fifteen hundred families.... Between 1950 and 1990, the Hill [District] lost 71 percent of its residents (more than thirty-eight thousand individuals) and about four hundred businesses, leaving the neighborhood hollowed out.

They were replaced with 27 Pittsburgh projects. At the time of this book's writing, just five of those were standing. The panaceas were busts.

Looking Back, Forward

The story doesn't end there. The author goes into details about the aftermath of the extensive flattening; delves into several current projects, including one that still appears to show some promise in, of all places, Karl-Marx-Hof in Vienna, Austria; and discusses how to fix what has been broken.

Some could be taken aback — while many others will nod in agreement — to find discerning observers of the past who seem to make more sense than the prevailing prodigies. Husock, for instance, discusses President Richard Nixon's domestic policy advisor Daniel Patrick Moynihan — a Harvard professor and a Democrat — at the time that Nixon declared a moratorium on public housing. (It didn't end then, but it did take different routes.) At that point, keep in mind, it was evident that the federal government had become (as one sociologist put it) the "biggest slumlord in history."

A subsequent voucher program, now serving 1.3 million households in this country, has its own concerns, as the author reports. But there are also brighter spots. Husock points to, for example, the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA), which has been working with the Integral Youth and Family Project, which (over a seven-year period) saw the percentage of those households holding a job rise from 18.5 percent to 62 percent. That wasn't magic. That also cost the AHA $26.7 million.

In a Bronx project still in operation, Husock talks with its "mayor," a man who lived in the area pre-project, where he was raised by Sicilians, and fondly recalls the celebrations of the Feast of San Gennaro. "It was family," he recalls. Today, the surrounding area is a "no-man's-land," where people can't leave their units because of the nearby gang activity. Many tenants in the "Jackson Houses," we learn from the mayor, simply "throw bags of garbage out the window."

It is worthwhile, says the author, to reflect on what Moynihan's "proposed approach to race relations — benign neglect — could mean to people of modest means broadly when it comes to housing."

We are also reminded by Husock of another well-known writer and activist, Jane Jacobs (1916-2006), the author of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1993). Husock praises her criticism of the projects at the time they were being erected, and favorably quotes many of her points, such as this from the above book, which declared: "Good shelter is a useful good in itself, as shelter. When we try to justify good shelter instead on the pretentious grounds that it will work social or family miracles, we fool ourselves."

Starting at a posh New York museum with starry-eyed, idealistic utopians, then exposing what they ultimately sculpted, the message that Husock delivers is clear-eyed and undogmatic. The dreams of supposed experts may not be wisdom. ■

THE LAST WORD

Denouncing Socialism While Supporting It

by Gary Benoit

outchill/Adobe Stock

Even in today's woke times, most Americans, if asked, would say they oppose socialism. So would most politicians. Yet the country has, over time, become increasingly socialistic. Why is that?

One reason is that many Americans, including many who consider themselves anti-socialist, do not possess enough understanding to recognize socialist policies for what they are. They may recognize that full-blown socialism is destructive of freedom and prosperity, but still be blissfully unaware of the creeping socialism that leads to full-blown socialism.

Another reason is the difference between the rhetoric and record of many politicians — and that includes socialist politicians whose constituents oppose socialism and would vote out of office a self-proclaimed socialist.

The idiom "Actions speak louder than words" is particularly apropos when it comes to deceptive politicians. But occasionally the deception is not only in the words they utter, but also in the actions they may take. In such cases, albeit rare, both the words and the actions are deceptive.

Such was the case in the U.S. House of Representatives on November 21, 2025, when many congressmen who routinely vote for unconstitutional Big Government socialist policies joined their genuinely anti-socialist colleagues in overwhelmingly passing H. Con. Res. 58. This concurrent resolution (you guessed it!) denounces socialism. It accurately states that "socialist ideology necessitates a concentration of power that has, time and time again, collapsed into communist regimes, totalitarian rule, and brutal dictatorships." And it resolves: "That Congress denounces socialism in all its forms, and opposes the implementation of socialist policies in the United States."

Perhaps not surprisingly, H. Con. Res. 58 passed by the lopsided vote of 285 to 98. Yet this lopsidedness could not have occurred unless the "yeas" included not just representatives who genuinely oppose "the implementation of socialist policies in the United States," but also representatives who claim to be against socialism while supporting it in at least some of "its forms." How could it be otherwise? After all, if 285 members of the House truly oppose socialist policies, then those policies would soon cease to exist — if for no other reason than that all funding bills must originate in the House.

Because we did not want to give undeserved favorable scores to the pretenders, we did not include this vote in the latest installment of our Freedom Index congressional scorecard (page 24). To see how House members voted on H. Con. Res. 58, go to congress.gov/votes/house/119-1/305. We recommend doing so, in part, to find out who the 98 congressmen are — all of them far-left Democrats, by the way — who voted against denouncing socialism. But we also recommend looking at the yeas — and making your own assessment as to who sincerely opposes socialism and who does not by checking out their scores in the Freedom Index.

The 285 yeas included 199 Republicans (all of the Republicans who voted) and 86 Democrats. Certainly the motivation behind the votes cast by many Democrats may be questioned, but how about Republicans?

During the floor debate prior to the vote, Democrat James Himes (Conn.), who voted for the resolution, indicated that the Republican president is imposing socialism by taking a 10-percent stake in Intel, as well as significant stakes in other companies. "If the definition of socialism is political control over the means of production, welcome to the great socialist state of the United States of America," he said. He also said that "we are now living in one of the most socialist countries on the planet."

Congress should have intervened to stop President Trump from unilaterally (and unconstitutionally!) acquiring partial U.S. government ownership of major companies. If Congress had done its constitutional duty to pass legislation against this form of socialism, this vote would be in our Freedom Index. Unfortunately, no such vote has (yet) taken place.

The problem is bipartisan. The solution is to become informed and insist that politicians honor their oath of office to the Constitution irrespective of their party affiliation — and that includes opposing socialism in all its forms. ■

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By Karl Marx

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The Con of the Con Con: The Case Against the States Amending the U.S. Consitution — BOOK

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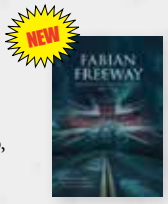
Fabian Freeway — BOOK



By Rose L. Martin

What if America's drift toward collectivism was planned? *Fabian Freeway: High Road to Socialism in the U.S.A.* exposes how Britain's Fabian Society exported its slow-motion revolution to America. Rose L. Martin traces its hidden networks, naming the groups and operatives who disguised socialist designs as "liberal reform." Backed by official records, rosters, and congressional data, this reprinted book includes an updated foreword by Joe Wolverton II, J.D. (2025ed, 582pp, pb, $10.00ea) **BKFF**

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